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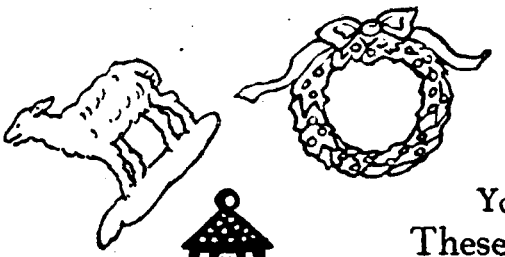

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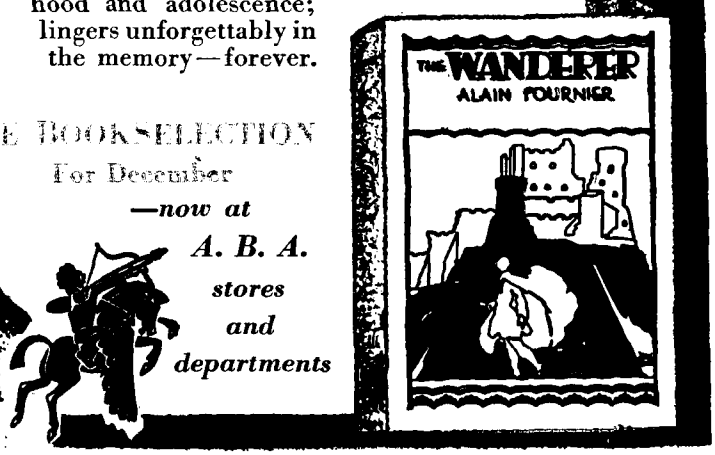

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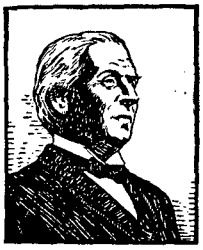

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Notes on New Books

Essays and Criticism

Modern English in the Making. *By George H. McKnight. Appleton. $4.00.*

This book tells the story of the making of that rich and—in the light of history—recent phenomenon, the English language. It does not delve far into the Celtic, Saxon, and Roman *origins* of English, but it tells with both vividness and scholarship the story of the "making" of English from Chaucer's day to our own. The author relates English words to ideas, to psychology and to the history of man generally. It is a book for all intelligent readers who wish to know more of the genesis of Anglo-Saxon culture and language. The chapter entitled "Beginnings of American English" is of peculiar interest. It will serve to upset a host of current prejudices.

Matthew Arnold. *By Hugh Kingsmill. Dial Press. $5.00.*

Mr. Kingsmill is conspicuously in evidence in his book on Matthew Arnold. There are times when the reader is somewhat puzzled as to who is the book's chief protagonist—for example, when Mr. Kingsmill interrupts the narrative to engage in battle with the reviewers of his own work. Nevertheless the book has distinction, an original point of view, and an acid bite. Its theme, according to Mr. Kingsmill's own words, is the collapse of Matthew Arnold the poet into Matthew Arnold the prophet. Mr. Kingsmill deplores the tendency of poets to forsake their proper work and become prophets, citing Coleridge, Tolstoi, Nietsche, Carlyle, and Ruskin; and, more recently, H. G. Wells, Belloc, and Chesterton. "One might add Bernard Shaw, if the German or Elizabethan use of the word poet could be stretched to include him".

The Outermost House. *By Henry Beston. Doubleday, Doran. $3.00.*

Cape Cod as viewed through the eyes of a naturalist presents an aspect entirely different from ordinary visualization. One thinks of the Cape in terms of Plymouth with historic Plymouth Rock, and a long arm of sand and dunes reaching out into the sea, whereas Mr. Beston, who lived for a year in his little Foc's'le on the ocean side of the peninsula, sees the everchanging phases of Nature and interprets them in an unusual manner. It is reasonable to assume that wherever life exists a naturalistic chronicle will uncover the minute wonders that escape the traveller, and it is gratifying to New Englanders that their summer playground has thus been lifted from the category of a sand-spit to a living thing which offers much more than meets the casual eye.

History, Law and Social Science

Wage Arbitration: Selected Cases, 1920-1924. *By George Soule. Macmillan. $2.00.*

Here Mr. Soule introduces the case method into industrial economics. No more diversified and hence complementary case studies of wage arbitration could possibly have been chosen: in the printing, the meat-packing, the railroad and the garment industries. Practically every variety of union strength and capital organization are touched in them. In every argument each side gives all the reasons why wages should be increased and not lowered, while the other side presents the reasons why they should be reduced and not increased. As Mr. Soule puts it: "Hardly any set of economic facts or theories is foreign to this (debate) in the long run. It involves the discussion of price levels, of the business cycle, standards of living, of profits, of competition, or productive friendship, of economic waste and much besides". In the nature of the case this book is not very dramatic; except to those to whom the way our economic institutions function is of vital interest.

The Hammer and the Scythe. *By Anne O'Hare McCormick. Knopf. $3.50.*

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(*Continued on page XIV*)

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Notes on New Books—Continued

not constantly protest her objectivity, she is just naturally objective on the best of all possible grounds, that a great upheaval like the Russian Revolution is not a thing to be for or against. In this book she presents Communist Russia on its entrance into the second decade with a critical sympathy for its evolving institutions and a human appreciation for the daily life of its people which raises it above most of the official and semi-official reports on Russia we have thus far seen. Her pen sketches of the revolutionary leaders are little masterpieces, and so is the atmosphere with which she conveys the life of the cities, of the industrial workers, of the peasantry, the new bureaucracy, and of the intellectual fortunes of the new Russia.

Prohibition, Legal and Illegal. *By Howard Lee McBain. Macmillan. $2.00.*

Brief, clear, concise in its warranted authority, this little masterpiece of the strictly legal aspects of prohibition ought to be read by everybody who wishes to respect his own opinions on this absurd but vital issue. Professor McBain, who is Ruggles Professor of Constitutional Law at Columbia, insists that he is not discussing in this book the social wisdom or stupidity, the political or economic implications of the "noble experiment". "It deals solely with the law." But he is far too learned and, above all things, too witty, to write of law by writing "solely" of it. Here are some of his random observations: "Opposition to the amendment (the Prohibition Amendment) based upon the notion that it interferes with personal liberty, is just so much fustian. Of course it interferes with individual liberty, but so does nearly all law"; "Everybody knows that in organized society there can be no such thing as plenary liberty"; and that civil liberties are largely a matter of expediency. Dr. McBain discusses the legalistic dilemmas of prohibition—as they confuse the theories of property rigths, or double jeopardy, of the conflict of federal and state law—and he shows with telling effect that these dilemmas render prohibition not a matter of law but a matter of politics in the worst sense. The result of his observation is that in time we will have to evolve a legal, a strictly legal, way of circumventing the law.

Labor and Farmer Parties in the United States, 1828-1928. *By Nathan Fine. Rand School. $3.00.*

Nathan Fine has made a most valuable contribution to the literature of American labor. Labor literature divides itself roughly into two parts: labor in the economic, the trade union sphere; and labor in the field of political action. Mr. Fine's study is really the first of its kind, and this does not exclude the *History of Labor in the United States,* by Professor Commons and Associates, to deal exhaustively from the very beginning with the efforts of organized labor to express itself through the ballot. The author's research points to him that some day we will have a labor party comparable to the British Labor Party or to the Social Democratic Parties of Western Europe. To us his own story points the fact that industrial democracy in the United States is more likely to be fought out in the strictly industrial field. But be that as it may, there can be no doubt that this volume will be thumbed time and again by the student of American labor.

Race and Civilization. *By Friedrich Hertz. Macmillan. $3.50.*

Dr. Hertz's volume is fundamentally a polemic—a rather distinguished polemic, distinguished in its sanity and no less so in its scholarship. But it is a pamphlet, extended, though not padded, into some three hundred and odd pages. The various controversies in racial theory and racial values, the various schools of racial psychology, capacity and "character", the problems of physical anthropology and miscegenation, are all taken up in their historical significance and evaluated in the light of our present knowledge, though by no means with the scrupulous discipline of the American anthropologists under the leadership of Professor Boas. The whole book is sharpened to cut to pieces the anthropological pseudo-science which Gobineau started in France; which Chamberlin, Fischer, Guenther, Lenz and the latter day half-crazed Pan-Germans sophisticated into the doctrine of Nordic superiority; and which are at present being carried on to their logical nonsensicalness by our own Messrs.

(*Continued on page XVIII*)

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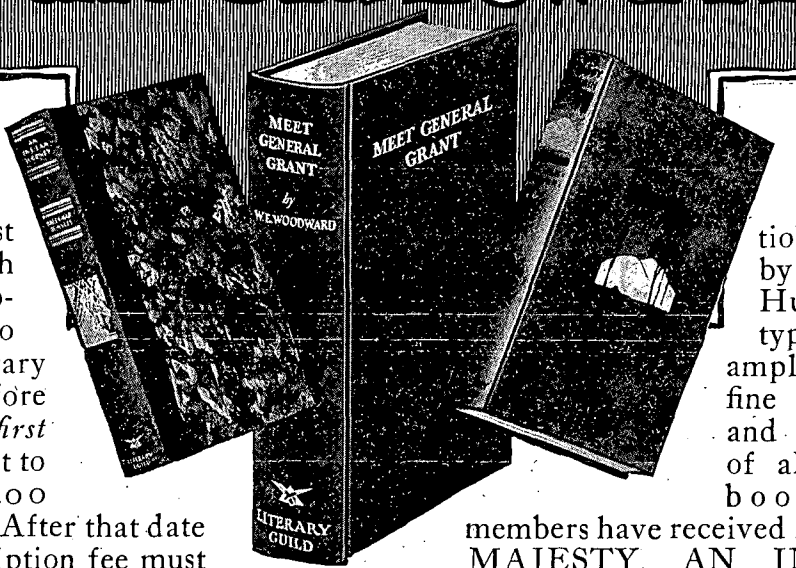

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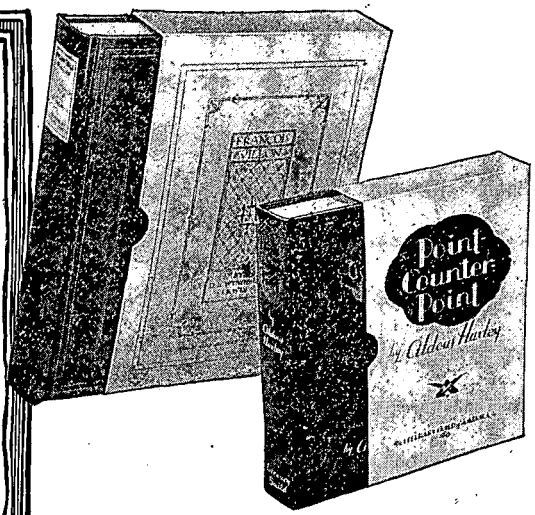

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(*Continued from page XIV*)

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Education

College or Kindergarten. *By Max McConn. New Republic. $1.00.*

If there is a shrewder, kindlier, and more gently sceptical Dean anywhere in these United States than Dean Max McConn of Lehigh University, we should love to meet him. At least we have never seen a more wisely sensible criticism of our American College than in this little book of his, for all its caution and diplomacy. His thesis is very simple. Those who want to go to college for "activities", "friendships which last through life", "social prestige", "because fond papa and mama want them to go"—all those should go to the high class Kindergarten which most of our colleges really are. There they can get fraternity life, "honor systems", the manners which they ascribe to gentlemen and ladies, vicarious sports in which only a small percentage really participates, and prescribed reading. In this higher Kindergarten Dean McConn would not have distinguished teachers and scholars, but a faculty which appreciates pretty much the same things the student wants. He assures us that such Kindergartens can do no harm. In contradistinction, the Dean would also have some Real Colleges in which the life of the mind would be respected and the "character" of the students let alone. The faculty of the Real College would have to be a company of scholars, and the methods of study would be the eternal method of the love of learning for its own sake. Incidentally, by the Real College Dean McConn does not mean "experimental" colleges à la Dr. Meiklejohn, whose views he dissects with

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great cynical deftness, or the Antioch Idea, or some other new-fangled and easy road to Parnassus. The Real College to him is exactly what it is to Plato, or to Abelard or to Jowett or to Irving Babbitt. And contrary to general opinion, the Real College presents far fewer educational problems for those who are fit for it than any other kind.

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Hans Andersen the Man. *By Edith Reumert. Dutton. $3.50.*

The tragedy in the life of Hans Christian Andersen was not his miserable early environment, the lack of recognition in his own country until it was almost too late, his unhappiness in his various love affairs; it was that throughout his life he suffered from what he called "the isolation of the excluded". Continually buffeted by fate, perhaps the blow that hurt him most was when the son

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of his benefactor, Jonas Collin, refused to extend to him the intimacy of the *Du*, the Danish mode of address between friends who are equal. The sting of that refusal cut Andersen to his dying day. Andersen's sentimental life was at once complicated and monotonous. Nearly all the objects of his devotion promptly married other suitors. That was the case with his first two great loves, Riborg Voight and Louise Collin. Jenny Lind, "The Swedish Nightingale", was the great affair of his later life. She married her pianist. In love unhappy as a pursuer, he was ever more miserable as the pursued. When the world had accepted him as the great Hans Christian Andersen, he was pestered to death by excited females. One of them followed him about shouting "Lovable soul of a man!" Others assaulted him with kisses. He revenged himself by using them as models in his writings.

Anthony Trollope. *By Hugh Walpole. Macmillan. $1.25.*

Today, when it is the fashion to admire realism and not romance in both literature and its creators, a study of the most realistic and matter-of-fact of Victorian novelists is of peculiar interest. Hugh Walpole has made a very readable book out of his study of Trollope for *The English Men of Letters* series. All the essential facts of Trollope's career are assembled in a fresh fashion, making their telling nearly as interesting as one of his own novels. The critical chapters, while offering nothing either new or exhaustive, raise all the important points upon Trollope as an artist.

Lincoln: Emancipator of the Nation. *By Frederick Trevor Hill. Appleton. $3.00.*

In this biographical decade it was inevitable that several biographies of Lincoln would appear, and the best of these appreciate so fundamentally the epic figure of Lincoln that they run to epic proportions. Both Carl Sandburg's and the late Senator Beveridge's biographies guide the reader through the background of Lincoln's life and leave him at the threshold of his greatness. Frederick Trevor Hill attempt a bird's-eye view of the Emancipator from his background to his death. It is a simple story but it sacrifices nothing to its simplicity. Mr. Hill is too distinguished a Lincoln scholar to vulgarize his portrait through the latter-day variety of popularization. It is an excellent mixture of the "older" biography which gives the facts, and of the "newer" biography which attempts to give the man. Mr. Hill is above permitting any hero-worship to enter his tale. Lincoln grew from an authentic yokel, who wrestled before gaping and admiring audiences when he ran for his first petty office, to the time of his death, when he was as nearly a philosopher-statesman as Plato might have wished. Mr. Hill dispels the notion that Lincoln was primarily interested in the emancipation of the Negro. The proclamation was definitely a war measure. He does not portray Lincoln's faults in a spirit of apology. Lincoln was to his dying breath a politician. But he was also a man of genius and undoubtedly the greatest historic carrier of the Democratic ideal in general and its American version particularly.

Prisoners All. *By Oskar Maria Graf. Knopf. $4.00.*

It is not at all extraordinary in this day that the greater and lesser turmoils of Herr Graf's troubled existence should have been put between covers; but it is rather discouraging that the author of these disclosures should have come to feel—like so many others similarly afflicted with the tell-all virus—that the tiniest detail of his dismal history possesses as much significance to the reader as any other. Such a conviction apparently, is one of the accepted symptoms of this kind of autobiographical disease, and may crop out in a number of convenient disguises. Here, at least, there is no disguise; merely that impervious and shameless frankness which is far more baffling. Undoubtedly for those who can find expression in deliberate self-torture, to whom life has ever become such a thorough mess that it must be dramatized in order to be endured, *Prisoners All* will be definitely moving. One wonders, however, if such castigations of the spirit and such supercharged histrionics deserve their stage. Grant that Herr Graf received a fell blow from life; that the incursions of so material a thing as the Great War could have extended themselves to mangle a human soul

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as cruelly as Herr Graf's was mangled, nevertheless, the greater number of us will still cling tenaciously to the belief that there are recesses of the spirit which bread-lines, prostitutes, inhibitions, felonies, and the urge to write free verse cannot touch.

Travel

Memories of Books and Places. *By J. A. Hammerton. Houghton Mifflin. $3.50.*

The books and places are strangely and irrelevantly mingled, and it would be hard to tell whether this is a book of travel or a book about books. Both, indeed, with the memories of a varied life in many corners of the world and of as varied reading done in strange places—*Guy Mannering, Better Dead, Aucassin and Nicolette, The Purple Land,* and *An Inland Voyage* find themselves along with Montevideo, Ravenna, Bruges, Buenos Ayres, Venice and Petra. But they all form the basis for a series of essays marked by breadth and vigor and wisdom, and written in a charming literary style.

The Romance and Legends of the Riviera. *By Ysabel DeWitte. Henkle. $2.75.*

In a series of quick graphic sketches Miss DeWitte writes of the little known places that lie behind Cannes, Nice and Mentone. Her method is rather often that of contrast —what they were and what they are today— and her presentations are frequently sketchy; but she succeeds in giving an understanding of background through swift historical outline skilfully woven into the present actuality. Dulceaqua, Old Mentone, Castellar, Sainte Agnes, La Turbie, Eze, Cagnes, Biot, Vence—these and a dozen other small villages become more real and of greater interest than the glittering tourish towns down below on the shore. Without great depth, it is a delightful series of high spots by one who has a proper knowledge of her subject.

An Italian Holiday. *By Paul Wilstach. Bobbs Merrill. $4.00.*

Although the author avoids the tourist centers and attempts to find the unusual, this book nevertheless does not achieve distinction. There are chapters on the smaller hill towns; on Mussolini's boyhood home in Pre-

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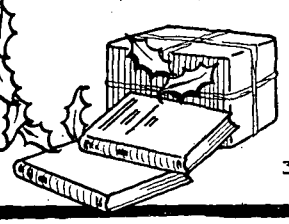

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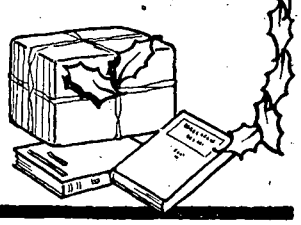

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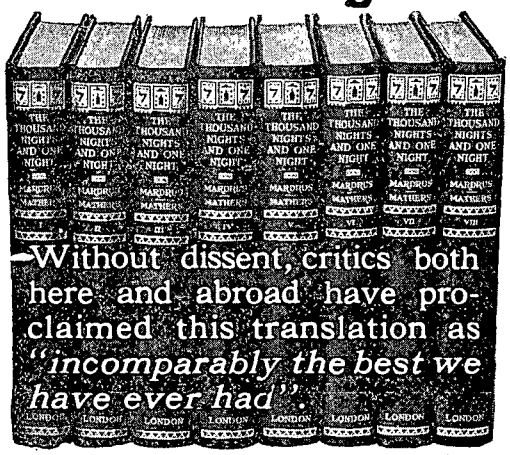

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dappio; on the last home of Santa Claus in Bari; on Taranto of the tarentella; on Asolo; on San Marino. The two most interesting contributions in the book are the chapter on the making of Parmesan cheese, and the one on the land of conical houses, that curious and unknown corner down near the heel where the homes are the mysterious *trulli,* houses of stone built like great round haystacks, making Alberobello, the chief village, "the strangest town in all Italy". The trouble is not that the out-of-the-way places do not have charm, but that they have more charm than the author in most instances manages to convey—more color, more of that elusive reality which is the personality of a place.

Roads to the North. *By Charles S. Brooks. Harcourt, Brace. $3.00.*

A journal of the mildest adventuring of three Americans by bicycle from Southampton to Edinburgh which occasionally suggests *Three Men in a Boat,* but only faintly. It is mostly made up of inns and rain, and various excursionings into Winterslow and the literary style of Hazlitt, into Stratford and Shakespeare's characters, Tamworth and its castle, Selby and its abbey, and the many little happenings that can always be connected with one's landlord or waitress. But the author doesn't quite pull it off. If the personalities of the three travellers were made clearer or more interesting, or if the bits of humor were more spontaneous, one would not miss so much the flavor of the places through which they passed. They do talk and think rather overwhelmingly of trifles—beds or bacon or bicycles. No, these are not trifles on such a trip, but the trouble is that here they all seem trifling and unimportant, and not so very interesting.

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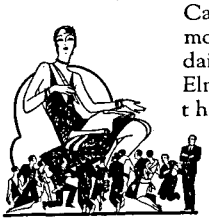

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Round About Andorra. *By Bernard Newman. Houghton Mifflin. $3.00.*

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Winged Sandals. *By Lucien Price. Little Brown. $3.50.*

Lucien Price calls his book "a voyage upstream in European civilization". It is that, from the section on France with its cathedrals, through Germany with emphasis on Beethoven and Wagner, to Italy with chapter on Venice, Florence and Rome, and on by way of Paestum to Greece, the climax of an enthusiastic pilgrimage. The author is interested in our European heritage of culture and seeks for its richness and delight all along the way, in music, in painting and architecture; but the worth of the book is sometimes obscured by the chatty style of its conversations.

Seeing Egypt and the Holy Land. *By E. M. Newman. Funk & Wagnall. $5.00.*

People who enjoy conducted tours, with sightseeing lectures thrown in will like this record of what the author has seen on his several trips in the Holy Lands. The book is profusely illustrated. The author's main purpose is to suggest what should be seen, and he has arranged his material to show how the trip can best be made. Hardly an interpretation or a penetrating study, and far too heavy to be carried about as a guide book, it nevertheless will serve as an aid to a certain type of traveller.

Things Seen in Madeira. *By J. Edith Hutcheon. Dutton. $1.50.*

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(*Continued on page XXXI*)

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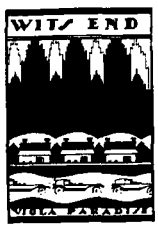

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Notes on New Books—Continued

and detachment which marked her for the rare being she was. It is difficult to speak of particular passages—the whole is woven together as one piece with a colorful pattern of related pictures. Though Gertrude Bell found the country by no means all beauty and richness and romance, yet it spoke to her with a peculiar magic, and the magic permeates the book.

FICTION

Pipe Down, Sailor. *By C. W. Whittemore. Covici, Friede. $2.00.*

Largely autobiographical, no doubt, this book, by the author of some authentic short stories in *transition,* is a story of the American navy during the war, of training camps, scout cruisers, coaling stations, cheap bars and cheaper brothels. It is colorless without making the lack of color of any great significance. Mr. Whittemore forgets that the so-called Man in the Street is as clearly an ideal figure as are supremely conscious beings, and that the reader must be made to believe, emotionally, intellectually and instinctively, in either. If one is in revolt against "great writing" and plagued by the thought of writing of fire as coldly as though that fire were ice, and of ice with intensity and heat, one should not lose sight of the primary object of writing at all: that the reader, in either or in any case, be burned.

The Vicar's Daughter. *By E. H. Young. Harcourt, Brace. $2.50.*

Written in the great tradition of the English novel, Miss Young's latest book has about it an air of abundance held in restraint, a simplicity and a dignity of form, and an honesty of observation for which one is grateful in these times when the unconscious ideal of so many writers seems to be to write like servant girls trying to write in the style of the tabloids read by servant girls. Miss Young's characters, an ecclesiastical but exceedingly unbigoted family, have depth and a fine reality. Her style is without fireworks and hand grenades, but it has a steady and more lasting glow. One does not hesitate to recommend for reading, now or two years hence, this, or any novel that Miss Young may write.

The Sons of Cain. *By James Warner Bellah. Appleton. $2.00.*

More than just another novel of the war, this book is written with vigor, heat and intelligence. One does not doubt the authenticity of the experiences it records. Though he is no master of English prose style, Mr. Bellah has that fine intensity that marks the work of some of the older contemporary English novelists. One thinks of the early (and by far the finer) writings of Somerset Maugham, and of certain things of Compton MacKenzie. It is well that novels such as this are being written; for the fogs along the embankments, the morning sun along the Thames, too soon confuse the memory and dull what pain there is.

Stone Desert. *By Hugo Wast. Longmans, Green. $2.50.*

The reader with a passionate curiosity about the Argentine will find this $30,000 Argentine National Prize novel, which has been put into helpful English by Louis Imbert and Jacques Le Clercq, a book to read and a cinema to look forward to with gusto. To others, this yarn of Roque Carpio, who returns, a social outcast, after twenty years in that strange country of ice-colored light, Tierra del Fuego, to the heights of the western Andes, will be remarkable because of the skilfully intricate manner in which fragments of plot from such varied sources as Defoe and Lafontaine have been fitted together. It is amusing that the translators can, in one sentence, reduce Argentine money to an equivalent amount of the money of the United States, and leave untranslated a word or two of the original Spanish, thus enabling the greedy reader both to eat his cake and have the raisins, too.

Golden Rain. *By Owen Rutter. Longmans, Green. $2.50.*

A novel of Borneo "dripping with insidious suggestions". It is the story of Jeludin, "a great-hearted leader" who rules a tribe of head-hunters, and a white girl, Noreen. All the properties and incidents of the type of story in which a savage chieftain and a white girl are the central characters are here: the bull-headed colonial officials, the down-trodden natives, the clash of wits, the single-

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Notes on New Books—Continued

handed encounter, the surprise attack and the final death of the noble Jeludin. It is the type of story Conrad sometimes chose to write—but a Conrad story told by Owen Rutter, which is something else again.

Strange Fruit. *By Phyllis Bottome. Houghton Mifflin. $2.50.*

Miss Bottome's short stories are superior short stories. Few women, indeed, write with the masculine vigor and directness that distinguish Miss Bottome's work. Her understanding of the limitations of the short story and her technical proficiency are admirable. One does not mean to infer, however, that these new stories are machine made: at least two of them—"Michel" and "The Lesser Light"—are writings of which anyone might be proud. For that matter, none of the twenty can be dismissed as especially trivial. Miss Bottome has so completely invaded the short story form that she might have invented it. Her right to it is unquestionable.

The Elegant Infidelities of Madame Li Pei Fou. *By Charles Pettit. Liveright. $2.50.*

Mr. Pettit's prose is of the sort often referred to as delicate and even exquisite, though why, one cannot think, for its affectations (alas! not quite so infectious as they were in his earlier *Son of the Grand Eunuch*, which has quite rightly become a musical comedy) are as obvious as the Woolworth building. Designed as "a phial of perfume to eclipse the stench emanating from the sewage", it serves its purpose; but in time, the scent it contains is bound to become as vaguely nauseating as the smell it is intended to eclipse. By too much insistence on it, this willow-pattern sort of tale becomes as ineffectual to combat boredom as gangsters' slaughterings and Sir Philip Gibbs.

Gotobedde Lane. *By Marian Bower. Bobbs-Merrill. $2.50.*

This second novel by the author of *The Quince Bush* concerns the efforts of an East Anglican antique dealer to find an ancestor for his only son. How erstwhile honest Job Orme cuts a page from the Commonplace Book of the Chevalier Blaise de l'Orme, how young Blaise discovers his father's deception and goes to the dogs, how Keturah, twin of Blaise, pays for her jealousy of Blaise's bride, Loveday Goymers, is woven by Miss Bower into a long and elaborate tale. *Gotobedde Lane* is an old-fashioned version of the strong-willed father, waster son and frustrated sister situation, with characters whose psychology is less convincing than their dialect, and a plot too heavily inlaid with entails, escutcheons and other impedimenta of the departed great.

Guyford of Weare. *By Jeffery Farnol. Little, Brown. $2.50.*

England in the early eighteenth century is the scene of Jeffery Farnol's newest tale of adventure, teeming with murders, duels, highwaymen, gypsies, nobility and haughty beauties. It is overflowing with "Zounds" and "Egads" and sentences such as " 'Vile fool', she cried, 'do you dream aught shall ever . . . compel me to your base will?' " The action is at all times exciting and swift, and if you enjoy a heavy diet of romance, mystery and swashbuckling you will find this book absorbing.

Angel Child. *By Grace Perkins. Henkle. $2.00.*

A delightful backstage story, with a child actress as the narrator. Lola and her "Mama" spend half their time at home in Flatbush, the other half with the theatrical troupe, whose members, with their love affairs, ambitions and jealousies are the basis for the slim plot. The real charm of the book lies in the comments of the Angel Child on what she sees about her. This precocious child is the curious mixture of naïveté and sophistication, innocence and sagacity, that is the inevitable in such surroundings.

When They Love. *By Maurice Baring. Doubleday, Doran. $2.50.*

A quotation from one of Heine's poems, "And I am of the race of Asra, Who die when they love", suggests the title of *When They Love*. The story is of the one real passion in the life of a woman who has had many unimportant love affairs. Unfortunately she and the other characters, an English author

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The Bookman *in* 1929

It would be a poor magazine, whose subject-matter was the ever-shifting world of literature, that could tell readers what its contents for a year ahead would be. But it would be a poorer literary magazine whose readers did not have both hope and confidence that they could take the contents of one year as an indication of the general nature of the issues being prepared for the next.

We can assure our readers that we are using the approval they have so cordially expressed for numerous features in this first year of The Bookman's independent publication—approval which has brought The Bookman more readers than ever before—as a guide in our assembling of future material; they can count on an increasing proportion of the kind of thing they want.

The Bookman's makers are bent on having it live up to its title. The danger of becoming "just another magazine" in a country well supplied with excellent monthly miscellanies will be avoided by throwing all emphasis on literary matters and closely related aspects of culture. To succeed in becoming indispensable to the minority whose aptitude and training enable them to bring discrimination to their reading will, indeed, prevent The Bookman from acquiring the enormous following enjoyed by magazines of more general appeal. But we are more than reconciled to that particular disability of our field. For the literary scene in America presents a most inviting prospect to a magazine which aims at applying high standards as well as at giving a colorful picture of current literature. To attempt to mediate between the remaining forces of the "genteel" tradition which governed American letters for so long, and the lustier, brasher elements which have come into prominence during the last dozen years, searching in both for the work of permanent value; at the same time to direct a large share of energy toward discovering the new and re-interpreting the old in the world's various literatures, is a task the accomplishment of which lies a rich abundance of satisfaction. We cordially invite our readers to join us in this adventure by being quick to communicate to us the enthusiasms or hostilities which their reading, if it is vital, is sure to arouse in them.

Of interest, we are sure, to every reader, is a series of papers to be published during the early months of 1929, which will interpret the work of the recent arrivals in our literature, the many young men and women whose achievements have made them merit a larger following than they have won by scattered magazine appearances and isolated books. The first of the series, dealing with poets, will be by Allen Tate. Treatment of novelists, critics, and dramatists will follow.

Another series will be concerned, not with literature proper, but with other subjects which customarily find literary expression—sociology, philosophy, law, religion, education, etc. The first, "The Literature of Business", by Stuart Chase, will appear next month. In an early number Harry Elmer Barnes will discuss historical writing.

The paper in this issue by Wilson Follett, "The Printed Word", will serve as an introduction to a monthly department which Mr. Follett will begin in the January Bookman, wherein he

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will conduct a systematic inquiry into the Anglo-American language as it is now being written, printed, and spoken. He will examine successively specific aspects of current usage—advertising English, reporting English, radio English, political English, and so on. Readers who are familiar with Mr. Follett's work—we have in recent months published essays from him on Conrad, Bierce, and on historical fiction—will agree with our prediction that his department will assume the significance of the series with which Professor Lounsbury made philological history in the '90's.

Another contribution which THE BOOKMAN will make to the study of the living language during the coming year is a discussion of the "lingoes" which have grown up around a number of colorful occupations. For instance, Wells Root, the dramatic and moving picture critic now in Hollywood, is preparing an article on the special slang of the movies. Among the subjects will be aviation, bootlegging, railroading, and the stage.

We take particular pleasure in announcing that Rebecca West has become our roving correspondent in Europe. She will contribute a monthly miscellany about the books, places, and people that interest her as she takes her keen, eager mind from London to Paris to Juan-les-Pins to —most anywhere, including side-trips to this country.

Another series from England is that by Ford Madox Ford on "The English Novel", which begins in this issue . . . We have secured two unpublished essays by the late C. E. Montague . . . From England, also, will come papers by T. S. Eliot and Middleton Murry.

John Macy will continue his revaluation of the great figures of the Victorian epoch, of which the study of Dickens in this issue is the second. His next will treat of Carlyle . . . In ensuing chapters of reminiscence Lincoln Steffens will tell of his early days in New York journalism, when the staff of the paper which he managed, *The Commercial Advertiser*, held several of the early makers of THE BOOKMAN—Harry Thurston Peck, Norman Hapgood, Frank Moore Colby.

In fiction we shall continue the high standard which we set ourselves during this past year in the series of stories which were acclaimed by readers and critics alike—Edward J. O'Brien giving THE BOOKMAN a rating of 100 percent in his latest short story annual. Mr. O'Brien has reprinted in his book Dorothy Parker's "A Telephone Call". In an early number we shall publish another story by Mrs. Parker, her first long piece of fiction in several years . . . There will also be stories from Genevieve Taggard, Cyril Hume and Elliott White Springs . . . A new writer whose work THE BOOKMAN will introduce is Guy Endore, for whom we predict a brilliant future.

Robert Benchley's humorous articles and parodies will form a frequent feature, as they have during the year just ending. The first of his "Parody Outline of Literature", a parody of the standard translations of Homer, will appear soon . . . Eva Herrmann, the brilliant young caricaturist with whose work BOOKMAN readers are familiar from the two collections we have presented, will supply us with samples of her amazingly witty drawing throughout the year.

In the "backbone" work of THE BOOKMAN—reviewing new books and presenting studies of notable authors,—we plan to rely this year less on securing the work of critics whose names are established than on developing a new set of critical writers from among the many forceful talents which have presented themselves in recent years. The literary scene is changing in this country at a rapid rate—a new "line-up" of personalities seems indicated as new influences are felt, calling for fresh guides and judges.

The interpretation of European writers will be a part of THE BOOKMAN's work each month, as in the past. There will be frequent additions to the series which in this past year has included indispensable studies of James Joyce, Wyndham Lewis, Norman Douglas, Marcel Proust, André Gide (incidentally, M. Gide wrote recently that Señor Flores's essay on him in THE BOOKMAN surpassed the criticism he has received in his own country), Julien Green, Emil Ludwig, Lion Feuchtwanger, Ramón Gómez de la Serna.

These are some of the plans for the immediate future which come to mind as this Christmas number of THE BOOKMAN goes to press. There has been no space to write of many others—distinguished poetry, important articles, amusing "stunts," useful departments—actively under way to make this year of THE BOOKMAN even richer in entertainment and guidance than its readers have learned to expect. And of course much of the best will come out of that vast, exciting Unknown whence arise new writers, new books, new artists, new ideas—and where THE BOOKMAN, in the interest of its readers, stands careful watch.

SEWARD COLLINS, *Editor*

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Notes on New Books—Continued

and his wife spending the winter in Italy, don't quite come to life; consequently the book fails to reach the heights of drama and tragedy that the author intended.

Head in the Wind. *By Lesley Storm. Harpers. $2.00.*

The chronicle of a charming English family. After the imprisonment of the father for an attempt to save his son from an extremely awkward situation, the story follows the development of his three children and his stepson. All this is told in an intelligent manner with a keen understanding of youthful psychology. Miss Storm has written an admirable novel.

The Empress of Hearts. *By E. Barrington. Dodd, Mead. $2.50.*

This historical romance purports to be the true story of the amazingly complicated and daring plot against Marie Antoinette and Cardinal de Rohan that inspired Dumas's *The Queen's Necklace.* The life at Court is described with the author's customary lavishness of expression, and the hated Austrian is shown as a charming and pitiable young woman who was ruined as much by her own pride and folly as by the conspiracies of her enemies. The plots and counterplots should prove a panacea for boredom.

Lean Twilight. *By Edward Shenton. Scribners. $2.00.*

Young Camar O'Neil, naïve and susceptible, becomes infatuated with a married man, and as a result leaves her unsympathetic parents to wander alone through life. The story of her subsequent adventures in Chicago, New York and Paris, although at times improbable, and her reactions to them, reveal the complexities of the feminine mind with a perspicuity unusual in a masculine author.

Beggars Can Choose. *By Margaret Jackson. Bobbs-Merrill. $2.00.*

A modern novel of married life that does not have adultery for its theme is rare, but Miss Jackson has succeeded in showing the struggles and joys of marriage without even contemplated infidelity. From Sheridan Road to Erie Street, from Chicago's exclusive set to bootleggers and politicians, the heroine moves, keeping her fine sense of loyalty and fair play; she is a character too seldom found in fiction, a wealthy girl who is not spoiled, selfish and useless, but who shoulders her task and lives up to the traditions of her family.

Cowboy. *By Ross Santree. Cosmopolitan. $2.50.*

This is no novel, but what might well be the overflow of an unwritten autobiography. A boy of fourteen who very simply rode west to his dream of cowpunching, now tells, in the language he learned there, what happened and why. The cowboy is here debunked and freed from fictional treacheries, while still remaining colorful. The language used, a drawling ungrammatical recounting, gives the effect of honesty in both opinion and character; and the shots of humor, combined with the author's illustrations, enliven the few dragging moments.

The Top Kick. *By Leonard H. Nason. Doubleday, Doran. $2.00.*

War is again declared by Leonard H. Nason, but it is a war two-thirds fun. The volume comprises three rather long short stories, first of which is "A Sergeant of Cavalry"—an ironic tale of a cavalry sergeant's ambitious action among doughboys. It is the only story in the book which may be called serious. The other two were obviously written with the aid of literary tricks, but provide good entertainment.

Fire of Spring. *By Dorothy Coursen. Holt. $2.50.*

In this deft first novel Dorothy Coursen economically etches the repressions unleashed by a rural revival and the kindliness buried beneath artificially stimulated hate. In "the two pretty dollies", Alma and Ethel, Aunt Jen finds her unborn babies, the fierce old Swedish grandmother bitter memories of her rich youth, the worshippers of a vengeful god two souls to be saved. *Fire of Spring* is distinguished by much sharp, sure writing and only fails in those cleft passages where

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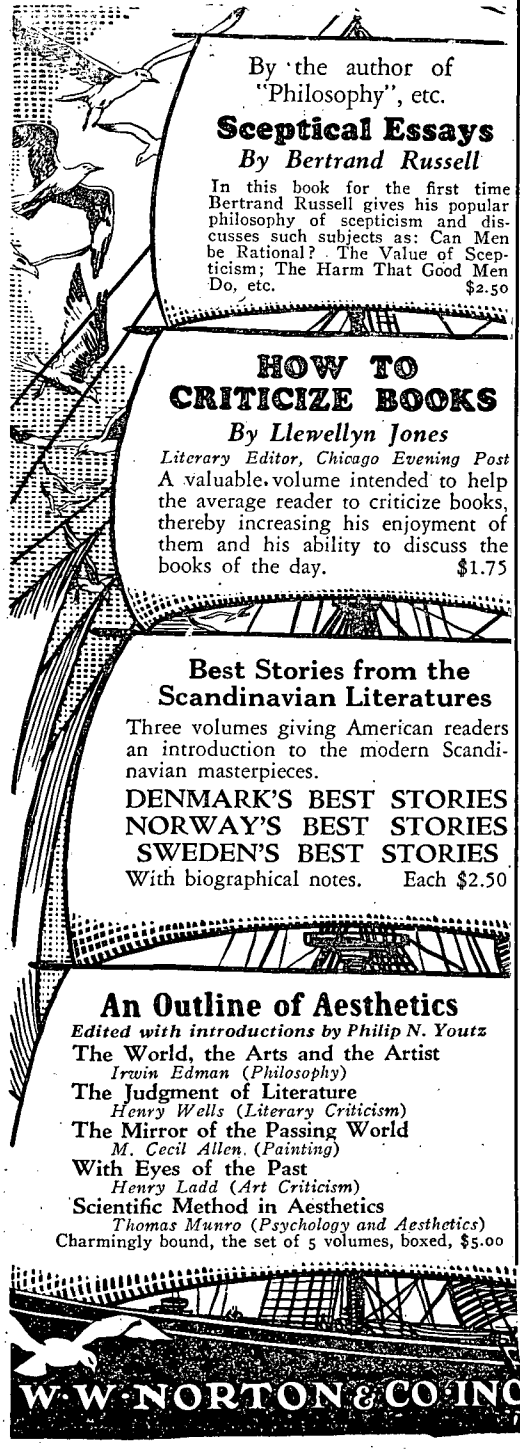

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the author reverts from her semi stream-of-consciousness technique to objective observations.

Cock's Feather. *By Katherine Newlin Burt. Houghton Mifflin. $2.50.*

In a day when much ink is spilt and bile expended upon the question as to whether unselfishness is good for the ego, Mrs. Burt sets out to prove that the way of sacrifice is not necessarily the road to frustration. When David Cray dedicates his life to the First National Bank of Kinderhoek he tears his feather from his cap and turns his adventure-loving mind from the bright eyes of danger. The cashier's cage is a prison which he enters only in order that life may be easier for his mother, brother and sister. But it develops that of all the people in this interesting, if somewhat overwritten story, only this wise young man to whom "life is one thing and living is another", is free.

Things Were Different. *By Elizabeth Fagan. Dial Press. $2.50.*

Miss Fagan, writing in the first person, tells the story of two young ladies brought up in the traditions of middle-class mid-Victorian society, each of whom broke away in her own manner. One openly violated the conventions of the times, while the "I" merely ignored them with the indifference of a superior mind. Mollie's story is exciting, considered in its setting, although it would hardly be an unusual one today. Emily's is slow, much on one level, and sad with the slow, tolerable sadness of an uneventful life. A generation later, Mollie could have pursued her adventures without becoming a social outcast, while Emily would have found an outlet for her energetic mind. The book gives a correct, although neither penetrating nor original, picture of the prejudices and artifices of a society whose aim for men was prestige, and for women, marriage.

Reubeni, Prince of the Jews. *By Max Brod. Knopf. $2.50.*

Mr. Brod tells the absorbing story of Reubeni, the enigmatic Jew of the sixteenth century who offered his people (almost without their knowledge) as allies to the Pope in defeating the Turks, if their reward might be

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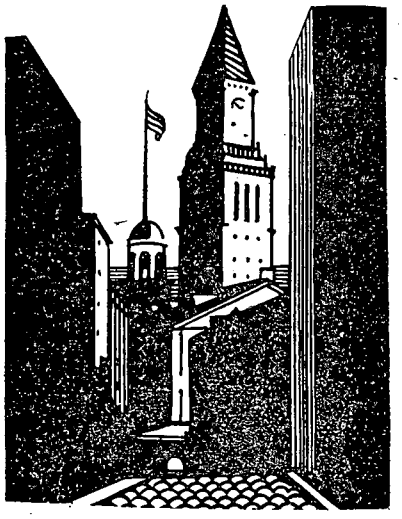
AUTHOR OF "OIL"



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Zion. Ironically, his project was viewed with favor by the Pope before his own people, crushed into a cowardly acceptance of their fate, dared to recognize him. His cause was carried on, after he had been reduced to a poverty-stricken fugitive, by sentimental disciples who converted it into a sort of mystical crusade, unwittingly defeating Reubeni's very practical purposes. Beside telling a fascinating story, free from the usual handicaps of a historical novel, Mr. Brod creates Jewish characters which are permanent and real, whose prototypes are alive today, products of an ancient tradition diluted by assimilation.

The Bride's Progress. *By Harold Weston. Morrow. $2.50.*

Mr. Weston's idea, in selecting a wedding lunch for the scene of his whole book, is an original and amusing one, and might have been extraordinarily illuminating had he resisted the temptation to "wise crack" and drag in French phrases. But what begins as a study of characters and reactions waxes so extreme and preposterous as to become farce, until suddenly Mr. Weston pulls a surprise and a sentimental conclusion which prove that he has been in earnest all along, and that the farcical note was an aberration. The dialogue is marked by a kind of adolescent cynicism and wit, but it is amusing enough to keep the attention of the reader up to the *dénouement*. It is to be regretted that Mr. Weston spoiled a good idea by such flimsy treatment.

The Feathered Nest. *By Margaret Leech. Liveright. $2.50.*

There seems to be no end to the authors who are writing nowadays about mothers who have given so much of themselves to feathering the nest that they resent the flight of fledglings quite able to fly for themselves. Miss Leech is less completely on the side of the children than most; at least she is sufficiently imaginative to concede that the mother's position is a heartbreaking one, and to sympathize with it, if not to condone its evil effects upon the children. The situation of a widow with three sons—the case of Mrs. Forster—was a particularly difficult one, since she had grown to depend upon her sons for masculine as well as filial attention. Miss Leech has drawn a more convincing

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Notes on New Books—Continued

portrait of the mother than of any of the three rebelling sons, because these too obviously represented types, while Mrs. Forster was far more than a figurehead.

Towers Along the Grass. *By Ellen Du Poise Taylor. Harper. $2.50.*

Realism and romantic illusion are at odds in this book, even as they were at odds in the mind of the chronicler, an imaginative girl on a Dakota farm. The malignant influence of the mysterious Bianca Wells with her Italian heritage hovers over all the simple people in Spearhead, infecting some with longing for impossible beauty, others with jealousy, others with almost a mania for imitating the inimitable. Bianca Wells should have remained a mystery, a disturbing symbol to the beauty-starved townsfolk. Her too obvious materialization, and the actual, earthly obstacle she continually presented to the happiness of the chronicler in particular, destroys the value of the book as a symbol, and renders Bianca and the townsfolk too nearly absurd.

The Jealous Gods. *By Gertrude Atherton. Liveright. $2.50.*

The story of Alcibiades is too melodramatic and too peculiarly a product of his age to be interpreted in the half modern, half pedantic manner which Mrs. Atherton employs in *The Jealous Gods*. She succeeds in portraying his swaggering vanity, but never succeeds in convincing us of his greatness, notwithstanding her frequent hints to that effect. Mrs. Atherton has undoubtedly read and learned about Athens and Athenian customs, but she is so self-conscious about her knowledge that she fails to create any more than a text-book picture of Alcibiades's background. Without the spirit and atmosphere of Athens in the time of Pericles, the events of Alcibiades's life are meaningless and incomprehensible. The accuracy of the deails does little to compensate for this lack.

Headlines. *By Mildred Gilman. Liveright. $2.00.*

For her characters Miss Gilman has selected a small group of foreigners living in a Staten Island development and has portrayed in an ingenuous style their struggles against poverty and their attempts to become Americans. The daily lives of these people with their problems of self-preservation unwittingly provide headlines for the tabloids. As a character and event analysis *Headlines* attains its objective, although it deprecates life in an overstuffed semi-suburban development.

A Common Cheat. *By Sophia Cleugh. MacMillan. $2.00.*

This highly improbable tale involving a Moorish chief and an inexperienced, egotistical English girl is unique in one respect—that, though the scene is mostly laid in Africa, there are no revolts or kidnappings. Though she is surrounded by adventure and excitement, the heroine is so selfish and irritating that it is difficult for the reader to care greatly what her fate may be. Still the intricacies of the plot are diverting enough to make a few hours pass pleasantly.

Infidelity. *By Arthur Weigall. Brentano. $2.50.*

Arthur Weigall has written a very amusing farce about a young couple honeymooning on the Riviera, who must pretend to the maiden aunt of the one that they are carrying out her advanced theories of emancipation and free love, at the same time convincing the highly conservative father of the other that they are married with due sanction of the Church. The resulting complications afford a pleasant evening's entertainment. The book is chiefly notable for its delightful portrait of the indomitable spinster who once, in defense of Women's Rights, threw an egg at the Prime Minister's private secretary.

Here Comes an Old Sailor. *By Alfred Tresidder Sheppard. Doubleday, Doran. $2.00.*

A delightful tale based upon history which, because of its unusual presentation, deserves to become most popular. Cleverly interwoven with superstition and religious fervor, this story is set in the time of the Crusades when King John defied the Pope, with the subse-

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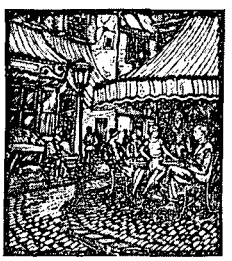

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quent open rupture between England and France. It purports to be the life of one Thomas Mariner, as related by his servant who is found half dead on the shore near a monastery after the great naval battle that upheld England's sovereignty, and carries him through a colorful period of English history.

What Everybody Wanted. *By Elsie Singmaster. Houghton Mifflin. $2.00.*

What Everybody Wanted is a cheery, conventional tale of a southern widow and her two beautiful daughters, all out for the only eligible men in the town. The title and the opening pages do not permit of any suspense as to the outcome, but there is a slight, pleasant suspense in watching the method of the author and wondering just how she will bring all her characters to the promised satisfactory conclusion. Miss Singmaster manages to keep a light story lightly afloat, and it is evident that she meant to do no more.

Books for Children

A Hat-Tub Tale. *By Caroline D. Emerson. Dutton. $2.50.*

To the small animals, Tuck and Nip, the Bay of Fundy meant fish and more fish, and pirates, and treasure chests cast ashore. It even meant Evangeline the Mermaid who listened attentively while they read her Dr. Holt's *Care and Feeding of Children.* And to Lois Lenski, who has illustrated Miss Emerson's amusing tale, it meant a chance for more of her lines of whimsy.

Treasure of Carcassonne. *By A. Robida. Longmans, Green. $2.00.*

Translated from the French, this is the story of the peasant Cassagnol's search for the treasure which the fairies and the Visigoths were said to have hidden at the bottom of the Great Well. Dorothy Lathrop's drawings point up the fairy-tale element.

The Begging Deer. *By Dorothy Rowe. Macmillan. $2.00.*

Miss Rowe has turned from the children of China to the children of Japan, with the same interest in childhood, whether Occidental or Oriental. Her tales of the customs of far-away lands are colorful and sympathetic.

The Pigtail of Ah Lee Ben Loo. *By John Bennett. Longmans, Green. $3.50.*

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The Fairy Shoemaker. *With illustrations by Boris Artzybasheff. Macmillan. $2.00.*

Five fairy poems, by William Allingham, Walter de la Mare and Matthew Arnold, have been selected as the setting for Mr. Artzybasheff's rhythms in black and white.

Detective Fiction

The Prisoner in the Opal. *By A. E. W. Mason. Doubleday, Doran. $2.00.*

Another macabre story in which the author's famous detective, M. Hanaud, cleverly solves the mystery at Chateau Suxlac and brings to justice the disciples of Guibourg, infamous abbé of the Black Mass.

The Man Who Laughed. *By Gerard Fairlee. Little, Brown. $2.00.*

Two ex-secret service men, with the assistance of Scotland Yard, foil the plans of the thieving man who laughs.

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The Shadow on the Left. *By Augustus Muir. Bobbs-Merrill. $2.00.*

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The Murder of Mrs. Davenport. *By Anthony Gilbert. Dial Press. $2.00.*

The machinations of a dual personality to cover up his past and ruin his ward are outwitted by an amateur sleuth, with the assistance of the C. I. D. of London.

The New Gun Runners. *By Neil Gordon. Harcourt, Brace. $2.00.*

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Murder Mansion. *By Herman Landon. Liveright. $2.00.*

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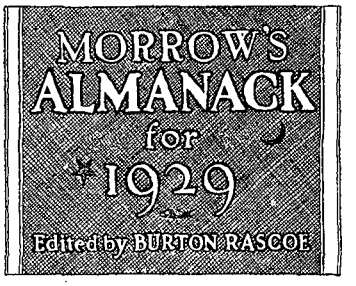

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In London, a band of desperate criminals from all nations attempt to destroy high government officials and are foiled by Superintendent Carbrooke of Scotland Yard, with the assistance of Blind Benito, of the Italian Secret Service.

The Door of Death. *By John Esteven. Century. $2.00.*

Greyhouse, a replica of an early Renaissance palace, is the scene of this clever story. The plot is woven about Ballion, the master of Greyhouse, a victim of his own hobby—the Spanish Inquisition. A complicated murder mystery is painstakingly solved by a detective who studies the family history.

The Swinging Shutter. *By C. Fraser Simon. Dutton. $2.00.*

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The Enterprising Burglar. *By Hearnden Balfour. Houghton Mifflin. $2.00.*

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Rogues Fall Out. *By Herbert Adams. Lippincott. $2.00.*

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The Net Around Joan Ingilby. *By A. Fielding. Knopf. $2.00.*

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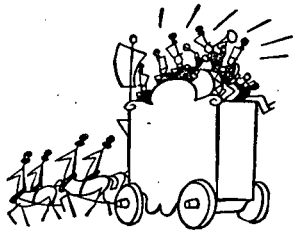

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The BOOKMAN

THE ENGLISH NOVEL

From the Earliest Days to the Death of Joseph Conrad

By Ford Madox Ford

IN FOUR PARTS: PART ONE

The Function of the Novel in the Modern World

ONE finds—or at any rate I have always found—English History relatively easy to grasp, because in it it is easy enough to see a pattern of what someone has called Freedom slowly broadening down from precedent to precedent. One may or may not agree with the statement, one may or may not like the fact, if it is a fact, that it sets forth; but at least it gives us, that pattern, some sort of jumping-off place, something by which one may measure and co-relate various phases of the story. The histories of most other races are more difficult to grasp or follow because they are less systematized and more an affair of individuals. One may be aware that the pre-Revolution history of France is an affair of power gradually centralizing itself on the throne and that the Fronde was an episode in that progression. Nevertheless the Fronde, with its violent personalities, its purely individual intrigues, its Cardinals, Queens, Condés, Chevreuses and the rest, was a baffling affair to follow, and obscures the issue—which doubtless was that, all power being concentrated under one hat, the neck which supported the head which supported that hat was easy to sever.

But when it comes to the History of Literature—and to that of the Novel in particular—almost the exact inverse is the case. Whereas almost every country other than England—or indeed every race other than the Anglo-Saxon—has a tradition of literature in which some sort of precedent broadens down into some other, it would appear that however docile the Anglo-Saxon may be in the hands of politicians or leaders—usually of a Leftwards complexion—the moment any esthetic discipline proposes itself for his direction he becomes at least as refractory as any Condé and almost more intriguing than any Chevreuse.

Any sort of English writer takes any sort of pen and on any sort of paper with, in his hair, whatever sort of vineleaves you will, and at his elbow what nectar you will, from metheglin to Chateau Yquem or Pale Ale, writes any sort of story in any sort of method—or in any sort of mixture of any half-dozen methods. So, if he have some of the temperament of the artist, you have a Fielding or a Trollope, a Samuel Butler or a George Meredith, each rising as a separate peak but each absolutely without inter-relation with any other.

That was never better exemplified than

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quite lately when you had—all living simultaneously but all, alas, now dead—Thomas Hardy, George Meredith, Henry James, Joseph Conrad and Mark Twain. Each was a considerable figure, but each sat, as it were, alone on his little peak surrounded by his lay satellites, and each entirely uninfluenced by the work of all the others—two solitary Englishmen, two Americans and one alien. Whether or no there was any resultant literary movement I am about to try to trace for you, looking at the matter with the eyes of a craftsman surveying his own particular job.

In the case of any other country or race such a proceeding would be comparatively easy. In France, for instance, living at the same time as, but all predeceasing, the distinguished Anglo-Saxons and the alien of genius that I have named above, you had Flaubert, Maupassant, Turgenev, the Goncourt brothers, Gautier, Daudet—six Frenchmen, and an alien of beautiful genius. They all met frequently, dining together almost weekly at Brebant's—where Henry James in the wake of Turgenev dined from time to time too. They discussed with amiability, with acidity, with passion or frenzies of hatred, words, cadences, forms, progressions of effect—or the cannon-strokes with which one concludes short short-stories. They were during those meetings indifferent to fame, wealth, the course of public affairs, ruin, death. For them there was only one enduring Kingdom—that of the Arts—and only one Republic that shall be everlasting: the Republic of Letters.

The resultant literary movement—for with their deaths it crossed the Channel—I shall endeavor to trace. For the Art of Writing is an affair as international as are all the other Arts—as International, as Co-operative and as mutually uniting. Shakespeare could not have written as he did had not Boccaccio, Petrarch and Plutarch preceded him, nor could Flaubert have written *Madame Bovary* as he wrote it had there not been before them the *Clarissa Harlowe* of Richardson. Nor yet could Conrad have written *Heart of Darkness* or *Lord Jim* had Flaubert not written *Bouvard et Pecuchet* or Alphonse Daudet, *Jack*.

It is at any rate in this spirit that, in these four papers, I shall present to you my reflections on the English Novel—which is the same thing as the Novel—and the pattern that, for me, it seems to make down the short ages during which it has existed. That I shall differ very widely from the conclusions arrived at—and above all from the estimates formed—by my predecessors in this field, who have seldom themselves been imaginative writers, let alone novelists, and who by the exigencies of their professions have usually been what it is the custom to call academic, I cannot help. For the benefit of the reader who wishes to know what is generally thought of these subjects I have tried to state, along with my own differing conclusions, what that general thought is. If, I mean, I belabor the winking lewdness of *Tom Jones* I am careful to point out that most of my professorial predecessors or contemporaries beatify Fielding because of his refreshing carelessness in most matters to which decent men pay attention. The young, earnest student of literature for professional purposes should, if he desires good marks, write in his thesis for examination pretty well the opposite of what I have here set down. But, in the end, it is as useful to have something that will awaken you by its disagreements with yourself as to live forever in concord with somnolent elders. It gives you another point of view, though you may return to the plane from which you started. I was once watching a painter painting a field of medicinal poppies which from where he sat appeared quite black. Suddenly, he grasped me by the wrist and dragged me up a small hill. From there that field appeared dark purple shot with gold. I said: "It doesn't make any difference, does it, to your composition?" He answered: "No, it doesn't make any difference, but I wish the damned things would not do it for when I have finished I shall have to come up here and do it all over again".

Since the day when Thackeray obsequiously apologized to the world and his readers for being a mere novelist and in the interest of a pompous social system poked fun at the greatest of all his books, which is perhaps

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the greatest of all books in the English language—since, then, Thackeray wrote the last apologetic words of *Vanity Fair,* an immense change has occurred in the place accorded to the Novel in the Anglo-Saxon social cosmogony. Today the novelist takes his functions very much more seriously and, perhaps all unconsciously, so does the Public. This is because the Novel has become indispensable to the understanding of life.

It is, that is to say, the only source to which you can turn in order to learn how your fellows spend their entire lives. I use the words "entire lives" advisedly.

In older days—dating back to improvement in locomotion—it was possible for anyone, whatever his station, to observe—at any rate roughly—a complete cross-section of the lives from cradle to coffin of a whole social order. In England, up to the days of the stage-coach, families were planted on the land practically to all eternity; and even within my memory it was nearly impossible for the agricultural laborer to move from one parish—nay, from one farm, to another. One of the most vivid of my souvenirs as a boy was seeing a ploughman weep on a great down. He was weeping because he had five children and a bad master who paid him three dollars and a quarter a week, and he was utterly unable to get together the guinea that it would cost him to hire a farm wagon to move his sticks of furniture to another and better farm. . . . Nevertheless that man knew more about human lives and their tides and vicissitudes than I or any other town-dweller in an age of shiftings.

He could follow the lives of local peer, local squire, doctor, lawyer, gentleman-farmer, tenant farmer, butcher, baker, barber, parson, game-keeper, water-warden and so on, right down to those of the great bulk of the population, his fellows and equals. He could follow them from the time the kid-glove was affixed to the door-knocker as a symbol of birth and until the passing-bell heralded their disappearance into the clay in the shadow of the church-walls. And although that was more emphatically true in Great Britain, the first home of the English Novel, it was almost equally true—*mutatis mutandis*—of the earlier settled colonial districts in this country. Until, say, the early forties of the nineteenth century it must have been almost equally difficult to remove from Rochester, N. Y., as from the Rochester of Dickens; as difficult to move from the Birmingham that gave to the world the word Brummagem as a term of contempt as from the Birmingham in a Southern State of the North American Republic.

Then, with ease of locomotion, came the habit of flux—which is infinitely more developed today in the United States than in Great Britain. In London and the urban districts that house by far the greater bulk of the English population the prevalence of the seven years' lease has hitherto tended to anchor families in one spot for at least that length of time, but even that space is not sufficient to give a family much insight into the lives and habits of its neighbors. It is significant that novel-reading is almost infinitely more a permanent habit in the United States than in Great Britain, and the position of the imaginative writer by so much more satisfactory.

In observing a social phenomenon like the Novel these social changes must be considered. The fact is that gossip is a necessity for keeping the mind of humanity as it were aerated; and where, owing to lack of sufficiently intimate circumstances in communities, gossip cannot exist, its place must be supplied—and it is supplied by the novel. You may say that for the great cities of today its place is taken by what in this country is called the "tabloid" and in England the "yellow" or "gutter" press. But these skilful renderings of doses of individual misfortunes, necessary as they are to human existence and sanity in great cities, are yet too highly colored by their producers and the instances themselves are too far from the normal to be of any great educational value. An occasional phrase in, say, a Peaches-Browning case, may ring true, but the sound common sense of great publics is aware that these affairs are too often merely put-up jobs to attach any importance to them as casting light on normal human motives.

The servant of a country parsonage leaning over the yew-hedge giving on the turnpike and saying that the vicar's wife was

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carrying on something dreadful with Doctor Lambert, might convey some sort of view of life, ethics, morals and the rest, to another young woman; but the minute dissection by commonplace-minded reporters of the actions and agonies of a lady who essays first unsuccessfully to poison her husband and finally dispatches him with a club—these minute dissections are not only usually read with a grain of salt but not unusually, too, they are speedily forgotten. Scenes, on the other hand, presented with even a minimum of artistry will remain in the mind as long as life lasts: *Ivanhoe* must permanently represent medievalism for a great proportion of the inhabitants of the globe though Scott was a very poor artist, and the death of Emma Bovary will remain horrific in the reader's mind whilst the murder of yesterday is being forgotten.

It is this relative difference in the permanence of impression that distinguishes the work of the novelist as artist from the other arts and pursuits of the world. *Trilby,* for instance, was no great shakes of a book in the great scale of things, but an American gentleman asserted to me yesterday that that work did more to cosmopolitanize the populations of the Eastern States than any movement of an international nature that has been seen since the Declaration of Independence. I don't know if that is true, but it usefully puts a point of view.

It is in short unbearable to exist without some view of life as a whole, for one finds oneself daily in predicaments in which some sort of a pointer is absolutely necessary. Even though no novel known to you may exactly meet your given case, the Novel does supply that cloud of human instances without which the soul feels unsafe in its adventures; and the normal mind fairly easily discerns what events or characters in its fugitive novels are meretricious in relation to life, however entertaining they may be as fiction.

That the republic—the body politic—has need of these human-filtered insights into lives is amply proved by the present vogue of what I will call novelized biography. Lives of every imaginable type of human being from Shelley to Washington are nowadays consumed with singular voracity; and if some of the impeccable immortals are in the upshot docked of their pedestals, there can, I think, be little doubt that in the process the public consciousness of life is at once deepened and rendered more down-to-the-ground. And the human mind is such a curiously two-sided affair that, along with down-to-the-ground renderings, it is perfectly able to accept the liveliest efforts of hero-worshippers, denigrators or whitewashers. The amiable mendacities of the person who gave to us the little hatchet and the cherry tree are today well known to be the sheerest inventions; the signal reputed to have been given at the battle of Trafalgar is far more soul-stirring than the actual rather stilted message that Lord Nelson composed. And even if Henri IV of France never uttered his celebrated words about the chicken in the pot, humanity must have invented them. That too must have been the case with the cherry tree. In the days when these catch phrases received world-wide acceptance the public was doing for itself what today is left to the novelist.

The practised novelist knows that when he is introducing a character to his reader it is expedient that the first speech of that character should be an abstract statement—and an abstract statement striking strongly the note of that character. For first impressions are the strongest of all, and once you have established in that way the character of one of your figures you will find it very hard to change it. So humanity, feeling the need for great typical figures with whose example to exhort their children or to guide themselves, adopts with avidity, invents or modifies the abstract catch-words by which that figure will stand or fall. What Nelson actually desired to say was: "The country confidently anticipates that in this vicissitude every man of the fleet will perform his functions with accuracy and courage!"—or something equally stiff, formal and in accord with what the late eighteenth century idea of fine writing was. Signal flags however would not run to it: the signaller did his best, and so we have Nelson. Had the signal gone out as Nelson conceived it, not Southey nor any portraitist could have given him to us. Or had Gilbert Stuart's too faithful rendering of the farcical

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effects of badly-fitting false teeth been what we first knew of Washington, our views of the Father of His Country would be immensely *modified. . . . But the folk-improved* or adopted sayings were the first things that at school or before school we heard of these heroic characters of our self-made world, and neither denigrator nor whitewasher will ever much change them for us, any more than the probably false verdict of posterity on John Lackland, who had Dante to damn him, will ever be reversed.

As to whether the sweeping away of the humaner, classical letters in the interests of the applied sciences as a means of culture is a good thing or a bad there must be two opinions; but there is no doubt that by getting rid of Plutarch the change will extraordinarily influence humanity. Ethics, morality, rules of life, must of necessity be profoundly modified and destandardized. For I suppose that no human being from the end of the Dark Ages to the beginning of the late war—no human being in the Western World who was fitting himself for a career as member of the ruling-classes—was not profoundly influenced by that earliest of all novelist-biographers. And, if you sweep away Marcus Aurelius as altruist-moralist, the Greek Anthology as a standard of poetry, Livy as novelist-historian, Cicero as rhetorician and Pericles as heaven-born statesman, you will make a cleavage between the world cosmos of today and that of all preceding ages such as no modern inventions and researches of the material world have effected. For though the acceleration of locomotion may have deprived humanity of knowledge of mankind it did little to change the species of generalizations that mankind itself drew from its more meagre human instances. Till the abolition of classical culture in the Western World the ruling-classes went on measuring Gladstone or the late Theodore Roosevelt by Plutarchian standards—but neither post-1918 King George V nor any future President of the United States can hope to escape by that easy touchstone. From the beginning of industrialism till 1918 we went on rolling round within the immense gyrations of buzzings, clicks, rattles and bangs that is modern life under the auspices of the applied sciences . . . we went on contentedly spinning round like worms within madly whirling walnuts. But as a guide the *great figure had gone.*

And it is to be doubted if ever again figures will be known to the whole world. It is possible that my distinguished namesake is so known because of his popularization of a cheap form of transport, and there are the prizefighters, aviators and performers for the cinema. But these scarcely fill, in the departments of public morals and ethical codes, the places that used to be occupied by Pericles, Cicero and Lucius Junius Brutus.

I am not writing in the least ironically, nor in the least in the spirit of the *laudator temporis acti.* We have scrapped a whole culture; the Greek Anthology and Tibullus and Catullus have gone the way of the earliest locomotive and the first Tin Lizzie. We have then to supply their places—and there is only the Novel that for the moment seems in the least likely or equipped so to do. That at least cheers me, my whole life having been devoted to the cause of the Novel—I don't mean to the writing of works of fiction but to the furthering of the views that I am here giving you.

One must live in, one must face with equanimity, the circumstances of one's own age. I regret that the figures of Tibullus and our Saviour do not occupy on the stage of the lives of men the place that they did in the days of my childhood—but I have courageously to face the fact that they do not. For it is obvious that it is not to the parson and hardly to the priest that one would go for counsel as to one's material life; still less could the spirit of Alcestis's address to her bed inspire the young women today contemplating matrimony.

In short, if you look abroad upon the world you will see that the department of life that was formerly attended upon by classical culture has today little but the modern work of the imagination to solace it. And that the *solace of Literature and the Arts is necessary* for—is a craving of—humanity, few but the most hardened captains of industry or the most arrogant of professors of Applied Science will be found to deny. Our joint Anglo-Saxon civilization today is a fairly savage

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and materialistic affair, but it is also an affair relatively new and untried. It is perhaps more materialistic than was the civilization of Ancient Rome and a little less savage than the early Dark Ages. But both those former periods of human activity had in the end to develop arts; and that, it is probable, will be the case with us. The Romans, it is true, relied for their arts mostly on Greek slaves or on such imitators of the Greeks as Horace and Virgil, and the Dark Ages almost solely on Churchmen who led precarious existences in hidden valleys. But the respective futures of those Ages are worth considering for our present purposes. For the break-up of the Roman Empire, for which innumerable reasons have been found by innumerable pundits, remains at least as mysterious as it was before the first ancestor of Mommsen first dug up his first tile and upon it wrote his first monograph. . . . Mommsen, to be sure, used to tell us that Rome disappeared because it had no Hohenzollern family to guide its destinies—and that may be true enough. Gibbon ascribed to Christianity the Fall of the Roman Empire and People; others of the learned have laid that catastrophe at the door of difficulties of communication, of the lack of a modern banking system, of the want of organization of the Imperial Finances or of a mysterious and unexplained slackness that overcame alike the Western and Eastern Empires—a slackness due to the pleasures of the table, the wine-cup, of sex and the like.

But we, as upholders of the Arts—the Moralist having been pretty well blotted out as a national or international factor by the avalanche that in 1914 began to overwhelm alike classical culture and revealed religion . . . we then might just as well ascribe the Fall of Rome to the inartistic materialism of the true Roman citizen as to any other cause. For the function of the Arts in the State—apart from the consideration of esthetics—is so to aerate the mind of the taxpayer as to make him less dull a boy. Or if you like, it is by removing him from his own immediate affairs and immersing him in those of his fellows to give him a better view of the complicated predicaments that surround him. A financier, that is to say, who turns from the bewildering and complicated antics of a maze of tape from tickers, or a realtor who turns from the consideration of corner lots and the tangled and exhausting intrigues that shall make the new boulevard of his city run through land controlled by his interests—both these pillars of the modern state may be expected to return as it were with minds refreshed if, taking a short respite from their arduous and necessary tasks, they lose themselves for a moment in the consideration of the adventures and predicaments of the Babbitt of Mr. Sinclair Lewis or the attempts at escape from the chair of the central character of Mr. Dreiser's *An American Tragedy*.

Arrived at that particular five-cornered plot in the territory of the Novel I have foreshadowed the end of this series of papers. For, having traced the gradual course of the development from Apuleius to Joseph Conrad, having followed it from the Rome of Petronius Arbiter to the Spain of Lope da Vega, to the London of Defoe and Richardson, to the Paris of Diderot, Stendhal and Flaubert—with sideglances at the Cockaïgne of Thackeray and Dickens and the Russia of Turgenev, Dostoievsky and Tchekov—and back again to the London of Conrad, Henry James and Stephen Crane—which last two writers America will not whole-heartedly accept as American whilst England won't accept them at all . . . having followed the devious course of the thin stream of development of the novel from the Mediterranean to the Bay of Biscay, from the Bay of Biscay to the Port of London and so backwards and forwards across the English Channel I shall leave it and you with a bump and with some regret at the gateway to the Middle-West. . . . Say at about Altoona. For it is there that the Novel, throughout the Ages the poor Cinderella of the Arts, is nowadays erecting itself into the sole guide and monitor of the world.

I should like to observe for the benefit of the Lay Reader, to whom I am addressing myself—for the Professional Critic will pay no attention to anything that I say, contenting himself with cutting me to pieces with whips of scorpions for having allowed my head to pop up at all—to the Lay Reader

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I should like to point out that what I am about to write is highly controversial and that he must take none of it too much *au pied de la lettre*. I don't mean to say that it will not be written with almost ferocious seriousness. But what follows are suggestions, not dictates.

If I choose to write that imaginative literature began in England with Archbishop Warham in the sixteenth century and ended with the death of Thomas Vaughan the Silurist in the first year of the eighteenth century to come to life again with Joseph Conrad and *The Yellow Book* about 1892 and once more to disappear on the 4th of August, 1914—if I choose to write those extreme statements it is because I *want* the Reader mentally to oppose to them the names of Swift, Keats, Thackeray, Browning, Swinburne, Meredith—or those of Messrs. Galsworthy, Bennett, Wells and, say, Virginia Woolf, to whom very particularly I take off my hat. I *want* the Lay Reader to make those mental reservations for himself. I should hate to be a professor, I should hate to be taken as dogmatizing and I should still more hate that what dogmatizing I do perforce indulge in should be unquestioningly accepted.

So that if I should say—as I probably shall—that along with all his contemporaries, as a constructive artist even of the picaresque school, Dickens was contemptible, or if I say that Meredith as a stylist in comparison with Henry James was simply detestable, or that the conception of novel-writing as an art began for Anglo-Saxondom with Joseph Conrad, or that *Babbitt* dealt a shrewder blow at the pre-war idealization of the industrial system and the idolatry of materialism than *Don Quixote* at pre-seventeenth century vestiges of the chivalric spirit, or that *The Time of Man* is the most beautiful individual piece of writing that has as yet come out of America, or that *To the Lighthouse* is the only piece of British—as opposed to English—writing that has really excited my craftsman's mind—the only piece since the decline and death of Conrad . . . if I commit myself to all these statements the reader must at once violently object that I am a log-roller writing up my personal friends—though I never knew or even know anyone who knows Mrs. Virginia Woolf. He must object that I have forgotten not only Trollope in my aspersions on mid-Victorian novelists but that I have also forgotten Mr. George Moore. (Alas, I always forget Mr. George Moore who is probably the greatest and most dispassionate technician that English Literature has ever seen.)

He must make all these objections for himself as violently as possible: then, in reaction, thinking it over he will probably find that there is something in what I say. At any rate he will have a sort of rudimentary map of the Kingdom of the Art of Letters in his mind.

These old-fashioned maps had their advantages. The cartographer left in his plans blank spaces in places where his enemies dwelt and labelled them: "Here be Crocodiles", "Here be Stenches!" or "Anthropophagi! Avoid this Land!"—and that was useful because it told you what parts of the earth were pernicious to that type of cartographer. So, if you were of his type you avoided territories by him miscalled. On the other hand if you disliked the sort of fellow that that map-maker was you adventured into the territory labelled of the Anthropophagi to find it inhabited solely by syrens.

It is with a map of that sort that I am trying to provide you. No other sort is of the remotest value. . . . Nor is it even possible, critics being human.

I am looking at the last page of a Manual of English Literature compiled by a critic who takes himself and is taken very seriously indeed. I read:

"His work often decadent, appealing to senses; a pessimist. Lacks restraint; small variety in mood!"

Think of that as the last word—the very last word—of a Manual of English Literature for the use of the English Classes of the most numerically attended University in the Universe! Could I at my worst do worse? Or so badly?

For that is that writer's critical estimate—that is all that thirty thousand students of a State University are given as an appraisal of . . . Algernon Charles Swinburne!

(*Next month: Part Two, "Toward Defoe"*)

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PRAYER FOR A NEW MOTHER

by Dorothy Parker

The things she knew, let her forget again - -
The voices in the sky, the fear, the cold
The gaping shepherds, and the queer old men
Piling their cumbrous gifts of foreign gold.

Let her have laughter with her little one;
Teach her the endless, timeless songs to sing;
Grant her her right to whisper to her son
The foolish names one dare not call a king.

Keep from her dreams the rumble of a crowd,
The smell of rough-cut wood, the trail of red,
The thick and chilly whiteness of the shroud
That wraps the strange new body of the dead.

Ah, let her go, kind Lord, where mothers go
And boast his pretty words and ways; and plan
The proud and happy years that they shall know
Together, when her son is grown a man.

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THE DRIFT OF THE CURRENT

A Distinguished Novelist Casts His Veteran Eye Over the Literary Scene

By Robert Herrick

DRIFT is often better shown by small objects in the stream rather than the large ones which may have their own laws, and occasionally defy nature. So I find it in testing the currents of our national life, that the less pretentious, the more usual expressions of its spirit give a fairer picture of the general movement than do those occasional phenomena, which the critics naturally prefer to isolate and exalt. Latterly I have been looking over what might be called the "mine-run" of contemporary American fiction, novels about American life written by the younger authors, many of them first books, not one by a distinguished name, yet all found worthy of bearing the imprint of some well established publishing firm. If one were to judge these specimens by themselves according to precedent and tradition none would be worth much thought, but taken as a whole, as part of a single season's output in fiction, they gather significance, with volume. Involuntarily I contrast them with the similar crop of the time when I was beginning to write fiction, thirty years ago; and there are obvious and interesting contrasts. Those were the days of *When Knighthood Was in Flower, Janice Meredith, The Crossing, To Have and to Hold, A Kentucky Cardinal, Monsieur Beaucaire,* and *Eben Holden.*

These titles suggest readily to anyone familiar with the literature of the previous generation the sentimental, thinly romantic, unreal atmosphere of the world our novelists worked in, when no matter where the scene might be the writer was moved by alien ideals of conduct and life. That era of pseudo-romance succeeded an age of provincial realism, when Mary Wilkins Freeman and others tried to hew to the line of observed experience, in a limited and arid environment.

The chief distinction that I find between this earlier picture and the present day is really a vast one: the majority of these "mine-run" stories of today try, in varying moods and degrees of sincerity, to reflect something actually felt and observed in the life about them, not necessarily always realistic in method—if that old school term has meaning any longer. These younger writers are busy painting the different aspects and corners of our vast Main Street—and not flatteringly. There are stories—too many of them!—usually written by women, that deal with New York, its night life and day life, gin and sex and Art; others which painstakingly depict our tamed prairie, with its towns all so much like each other and like the new New York; not a few that holding to a sound tradition prefer to exploit some less known, more primitive corner of the country, such as Miss Roberts's *The Time of Man,* or Mrs. Peterkin's *Black April.* These latter, however, are not genre pictures; the impulse behind them is no longer the romantic one of getting a kick out of the unfamiliar, the "quaint", but rather the scientist's desire to investigate, the poet's to realize. I do not include, of course, the popular "cowboy" fiction, which has become a stale commercial product, allied to the motion picture industry. . . . What is going on is a kind of sociological survey of these United States in the guise of fiction, and I venture to say that if one were to look over the several thousand dead and forgotten pieces of fiction published since 1910 hardly a town or hamlet or countryside of the forty-eight States but has received some sort of picturing by our novelists.

Something of the same process had been going on in the previous generation, as I have

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suggested, but this modern survey is being made in quite a different spirit from any former one. A spirit of criticism, sometimes acid with discontent. One likes to visualize motion by objects: perhaps Mr. Sinclair Lewis's *Main Street* is the most salient landmark of the new spirit, although years before Mr. Dreiser had been pounding in his heavy stamp mill much the same matter that the younger novelist presented in *Main Street* and *Babbitt,* and Mr. Masters dissolved acridly in *Spoon River* and subsequent chronicles of the mid-west. I am not sure that in the long, long run these earlier revelations of the American spirit, rejected because of their grimness, will not loom larger in memory than the clever journalism of the younger writer. But Mr. Lewis got himself read by the multitude who live in Main Street. I am not here so much concerned with ultimate values as with passing phenomena. Mr. Lewis has made a much bigger dent in the national consciousness than any of his predecessors, from Howells on. What remains to me most notable about his achievement is that Main Street became suddenly interested in seeing itself, that the Rotarians read and pondered *Babbitt!* That surely marks an epoch in our national growth. It is astonishing evidence of an uneasy consciousness (such as Mr. Lewis finely depicts in Babbitt himself toward the end of his story) that all is not satisfying in this best of all civilizations, in the best of all possible countries. The note so firmly struck by Mr. Lewis has been implicit if not dominant in most American fiction since—and is today. The War created a diversion, but the War so far as it got itself expressed at all from an American angle as in *Three Soldiers* and the popular play-movie *What Price Glory* was revealed solely on its seamy sides—which were many. More recently there have been numerous instances of this spirit of dissatisfied inquiry and frank revelation, such as Mr. Adams's chronicle of the Harding administration (and one might add its sequel, *The President's Daughter*). No longer do our little Babbitts among the reviewers hiss "scandal" at such frankness.

Neither poetry nor drama is as good a test of the national current as fiction because both are affected by extraneous considerations. As everybody knows there is no theatre, properly speaking, outside of New York City and the stale productions sent over a limited circuit of the larger cities: the playwright must cater to that heterogeneous herd on Broadway, selected solely by ability to pay extortionate prices for its pleasures. Also, as everybody knows, many of the better "shows" are still borrowed from England (less frequently of late from France), our more serious playgoers being largely indebted to Messrs. Galsworthy, Maugham, *et al.* The most indigenous theatrical piece for the moment is the murder-mystery, tough-life play, with the scene in New York or Chicago, although crime in Chicago differs slightly from crime in New York, and with crime seen through the hardened eyes of the newspaper cynic. Not much chance of art or ideas in such plays, and when, as in *Spread Eagle,* there is an effort to introduce them into the melodrama the subtle censorship of a complacent Main Street promptly kills the piece. When I was a young man we got our crime in a more diluted, possibly more accurate medium, through the muckracking articles of the popular magazines such as *McClure's.* There was crime aplenty lurking between their covers, but crime of a legal and social sort, not mere violence and thuggery. The muckraker tried to link his felonies to predatory wealth and political corruption, but these modern scenes from Chicago and New York present crime merely for its sensation values. The inevitable result is that the sensations are increased beyond the bounds of credibility, indicating that this source of excitement will quickly lose its zest and dry up without the aid of police censorship. . . . Along with diluted musical comedy which has become a staple article of theatrical entertainment of no possible significance, we have had innumerable "uplift" and small theatre efforts to create a national drama. As I look back over the thirty years during which I have been interested in such matters I must admit that the net results of all these idealistic impulses to give us plays that have reality and some pretention to art is almost negligible. If all the well-meaning money

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that has gone to naught in launching "high-brow" theatrical productions had been concentrated on the support of a single powerful repertory theatre sending its productions annually on the road, something might have been accomplished! But that is not the individualistic method of American civilization! . . . I am looking at the theatre solely as an agency supplying some comment on our national life, and except for the grosser manifestations mentioned above I fail to find much contribution of this sort.

No doubt the present vogue of crime melodramas is useful because to a few thousands of our people they will bring home a realization of the flimsy "securities" of our boasted civilization. But that realization any half awake reader of the daily papers could acquire. As for contributing to our knowledge of national life and our spiritual culture, if we have one, the theatre remains practically nul. Except—and it is a very large exception—for the creations of the one playwright who has imagination (some say genius) who can think in terms of the theatre and still attract considerable audiences to his pieces. I do not have to mention his name—highest tribute! O'Neill is a perplexing and contradictory subject, nevertheless. Just because he has imagination, strength, individuality, he steps forth beyond the typical, and it is unsafe to make large generalizations from his unique contributions. For instance the American reaction to the problem of color could not safely be diagnosed either from *The Emperor Jones* or *All God's Chillun Got Wings,* nor to those of labor from *The Hairy Ape,* and, I trust, not to those of sex relations from either *Desire Under the Elms* or *Strange Interlude.* All these interesting pieces are indigenous, could not have been conceived by any but a contemporary American spirit, and yet not one is either typical (as *Main Street* is indubitably typical) or quite convincingly universal, as *Hamlet* or *A Doll's House* is universal. They all lack something which might make them either purely national or beyond national in appeal. Perhaps the only play by this powerful artist which fulfills these exacting requirements is his *Anna Christie,* which at all events is the best *pièce de théâtre* that America has yet produced. But I see on the horizon no "school" deriving from O'Neill—which is regrettable.

In the case of poetry, unlike that of the theatre, there is for the purpose of judging the social record the disturbing factor that the creator is working in a medium still recognized as one of pure art, which possibly Mr. Masters alone of our modern poets has been able wholly to ignore. The impulse to create something of itself beautiful, in a void if need be, is still strong in the poet, the holy tradition of his profession. Sandburg and Frost and Vachel Lindsay, among others, have notably tried to fuse the intractable slag of American life into shapes of beauty with occasional success. Mr. Robinson has gone off by himself to play with old dialectics; if his verbal subtleties and innuendos are often clever they are as often dubiously poetic and only inferentially American in flavor. In his latest long poem, *Tristram,* proclaimed by his admirers as a masterpiece of the first rank, he has joined the band of those who in prose or verse seek for a new inspiration in rethinking with twentieth-century sophistication the ancient myths of the world. That has been the privilege in every age of the poet: to restate in the terms of his own time the familiar legends of past literature. But these recent American attempts at rewriting myths, or rather using the old bottles for the poet's new wine, betray unconsciously the acridity of the wine and the pallor of imagination without faith. Frankly I do not care to see Helen of Troy on Broadway, and for all of Mr. Robinson's verbal felicity (which is often mere agility) I had rather forget his reading of the old love tragedy and recollect it as it echoes through the tumult of Wagner. However improved psychologically the new version of Tristram may be, it has lost all its splendor. I wish our poets and popular novelists would let the old myths alone, instead of rewriting them to decorate their ingenious analyses of contemporary life. The simplicities, the faiths of the age of myths, which still haunt our memories, serve but to set off the metallic quality of soul for which we have exchanged them.

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I spent too many words on our theatre, which because of obvious economic and cultural facts has been and must remain the least important of all forms of literary expression. (In a country where good seats to popular shows cost a plumber's daily wage, how can the theatre be creative?) It would be more to the point to discuss the motion picture and the radio as cultural expressions—certainly the newspapers. And advertising! Which brings me inevitably to modern developments in the magazine. There was a time not so many years ago when the American magazine was distinctive the world over. That combination of informative cultural "general article" with a judicious admixture of carefully selected fiction has quite passed. Now we have thick signboard tomes, where thin columns of "reading matter" are wedged between display pictures of "refined" automobile bodies and modernistic gowns, and plumbing. The influence of advertising on literature and the national imagination is a fascinating theme—how it has destroyed forever Grub Street, and put the literary producer and the illustrator and editor into the country club class along with the successful doctor and lawyer; how it has disciplined the uncouth and the unseemly writer so that he may not shock the sensibilities of the patrons of the adjoining merchandise. . . . Even rebels like the *Mercury* somehow do not make up for the "old line" magazine. No doubt they are clever, no doubt they induce some people to reflect occasionally, and they are an excellent outlet for the Semitic intelligence. But the creed of criticism becomes as arid as any other creed, exclusively pursued. Whether Mr. Mencken has had any influence in improving American style by his animadversions against "professors" (God save the mark!) and his monthly sermon of fluent invective, I doubt. American style is becoming more flexible, less pedantic, more individual, but I attribute its improvement to the newspapers, who both destroy and create. In a word the present day American magazine is negligible either as recording or stimulating imaginative expression: at their best they are Sunday supplements or debating pamphlets, at their worst as with *The Saturday Evening Post* and *Liberty* they are mere bulky billboards for advertising "high class" merchandise.

One ought before leaving this corner of our cultural effort consider the journals of opinion, such as *The Nation* and *The New Republic*, of which kind England has at least a dozen excellent examples and France and Germany as many more. This form of intellectual entertainment has never taken firm root in the United States any more than Socialism or Buddhism or Tolstoyism: they remain exotic, caviar to the general public (even the educated minority) and oddly enough are supported by the munificence of capitalistic altruism. So far, right or wrong —and they are often right—their earnest editors and contributors seem to be making futile gestures over the muddy stream of our national consciousness, which sweeps turgidly on without the shadow of recognition. I estimate that there must be at least two hundred thousand intelligent people, with a modicum of the higher education and some interest in matters of the mind and the spirit, in these United States; the largest number of them that any of these superior "journals of opinion" have been able to reach is a bare forty thousand—one fifth, and not all of them continuously.

Having wandered over the rough fields of movieland and periodical journalism, which of course are "industries" rather than media of cultural expression, etc., I might as well add another quite recent manifestation in our cultural life, and that is the new kindergarten movement in the buying of books: the book-of-the-month clubs and so forth. Although I have the highest respect for the ability and the integrity of such guides as Mr. Canby, Mr. Van Doren and the other sponsors of this new movement, I am appalled to discover that so many thousands of my fellow reading men and women are willing to put themselves docilely, confidingly, in the hands of any tribunal of high intelligences and to take what is thus served out to them. But so it seems to be. Increasingly the better class of readers and bookbuyers submit their intelligences and tastes to the judgment of small groups, who thus assume dictatorial power not only over the intelligences of their

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subscribers (who have confided themselves to the extent of eighteen or twenty-five dollars a year, each) but over publishers and authors as well. I am amazed at the vista of a more than Soviet dictatorship thus opened up by such a combination of arbiters and readers and publishers. No doubt there will always remain a free market in ideas: print and paper and the spirit of gamble are too strong not to permit "outsiders" still to venture. Yet practically all chance of extensive publicity for any book will depend more and more on the combined judgments of these priestly guides. What a picture of the American mind this development completes! We go to our banker (or broker) for advice in investing our savings; we go to our priest or our pastor (reservedly) for spiritual leadership; we go to our Rotary Club or Chamber of Commerce for what to think politically and socially; and now we are to go to Messrs. Canby, Van Doren, Phelps, *et al.*, for what to read to nourish our spirit. Next shall we seek a collective judgment in the selection of our wives?

Americans, aware in the confusion of countless appeals and opportunities, that somehow life is not as rich, as satisfying, as it might be under the most perfect of cast-iron constitutions, in God's most chosen country, etc., are striving, pathetically in earnest, to find out how it can be improved, at least exploited to its uttermost possibility. They are breathlessly afraid lest they may miss the way to salvation—or "development" —just as the crowd pressing into the stadium is afraid that all the good seats may be taken. As a people we are so willing to be led, to be "shown"! It is humorous when it is not pathetic. We are losing our old gross pioneer appetite for knowing what we want and getting it and being proud of it, no matter how bad it is. Feminizing ourselves all along the line we repeat—"Show me the way to think, believe, act, feel, so that I may not be peculiar, a freak!"

Another development in letters of the present generation, which seemingly has not yet run its full course, is the widespread curiosity about notable lives,—the popularity of biography, not only the romanticized biography supplied by a Ludwig or a Guedalla, but the more indigenous product of our own soil such as the lives of Barnum, Brigham Young, and Boss Tweed. Note this trinity of monstrosities, for each subject was in his way a unique, an exaggerated, personality. The biographical analysis of these native sons has been on the whole neither damnatory nor palliative, mainly expository and truthful, as if our more thoughtful readers and writers realized that the facts speak loudly enough of themselves. This effort to restate our own past in its own terms without bias, without national conceit, I consider as perhaps the most notable impulse in contemporary American letters. Evidently, despite the restricted circulation of the professed journals of opinion, there is a large and growing appetite in and out of Main Street for books that reveal us to ourselves—a healthy sign of coming maturity.

I am aware that I have left small space for the clamorous voice of the young—from Mr. Sherwood Anderson to Mr. Ernest Hemingway. It is intentional. For in spite of the self-conscious and self-assertive press notices about their product I find nothing memorable which differentiates it advantageously from the work of older writers, when they too were young. I do not believe that youth, which fortunately we always have with us in varying stages of adolescence, needs or should have set apart any special platform or exhibit room. Whatever contribution it can make must enter the general competition. I have listened closely during thirty years for the joybells of a new literature, and on several occasions have hurried into the street and thrown up my cap in the belief that it was about to arrive. Only to discover after a little while that what made so much noise in reality differed hardly at all from what had been coming downstream all along. Naturally youth discovers sex with a fresh surprise at its potency and a violent reaction against the attitude of the elders, who know that it has existed all the time and are no longer much excited about it. From Mr. Dreiser's *Sister Carrie* to Mr. Hemingway's *The Sun Also Rises* there is no progress, except possibly in style, no startling discoveries. The elder novelist, to be

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sure, did not take a slut for his heroine as our youngest one did, nor make a sentimental tragedy over his hero's loss of sexual faculty. In simple truth there is not much the young writer can do with the sex life of human beings except to describe it accurately (which should be a record of *moeurs* rather than a clinic) and trace as deftly as possible its infinite spiritual ramifications, for which latter process youth is no better equipped than the mature. If the younger writers are less overtly sentimental about the race process, they betray worse manners and a more insensitive consciousness to the finer implications of sex than their Victorian grandparents. But just as the majority of gin-drinking, "necking" flappers must ultimately marry and become mothers, so the majority of sex-conscious writers, male and female, sink into the stream, where no doubt they discover other more urgent mysteries than that of coition. Youth naturally has a peculiar contribution to make to literature, that of freshness of perception rather than of ideas, but I do not find many instances among young American writers of capacity for fresh perception. More among English writers. . . .

Today youth means largely female youth, so far as writing goes. Just as women are taking over zestfully those political activities that have grown stale to men, so they are exploiting avidly their own notions of the world and putting them into books. Surely more than a half, possibly three-quarters, of recent fiction and poetry, has been written by young women. It is evident to me that this increase in self-expression by women has already wrought a real change in the character of general literature, just as the increasing number of women motorists has feminized the appurtenances of the ordinary motor and popularized the sheltered car. But this is hardly the opportunity to discuss what women are doing to our literature.

Coincidentally with this feminization of our literature there has come, it seems to me, a lessening of its emotional tension. I do not mean that literature deals less with sex—on the contrary! Women writers are at least as much preoccupied with sex as their brothers. But it is sex for the most part without high voltage, without passion. And other passions are absent or correspondingly subdued. Is it necessary to state that there are several human passions other than the sexual one which are suitable, nay necessary, for the creation of significant literature?—passion about God, about beauty, about life! American literature today has a low passional content: it is life observed, often minutely and precisely, but without any strong emotional conviction. What troubles me most when I test it here and there, is this lack of fervor, of passionate participation. For with all the rich material at hand, with all the technical experience won through generations of experiment, we should be ready to say something to the world in memorable words. But the best we can offer—a very fair best, too—is Will Rogers and Anita Loos, both ironists. While the most we can find to discuss politically is how best to get a drink or keep "prosperity" booming.

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A CHRISTMAS GARLAND OF GIFT BOOKS

By Robert Benchley

AMONG this little bundle of books especially selected for Christmas-Wistmas, perhaps the most pat is *Rubber Hand Stamps and the Manipulation of India Rubber,* by T. O'Conor Sloane. Into it Mr. Sloane has put the spirit of Yuletide which all of us must feel, whether we are cynical enough to deny it or not.

Beginning with a short, and very dirty, history of the sources of India Rubber, the author takes us by the hand and leads us into the fairy-land of rubber manipulation. And it is well that he does, for without his guidance we should have made an awful mess of the next rubber-stamp we tried to make. As he says on page 35: "It will be evident from the description to come that it is not advisable for anyone without considerable apparatus to attempt to clean and wash ('to sheet'), to masticate, or to mix india rubber". Even if we had the apparatus, we should probably be content with simply "sheeting" and mixing the india rubber and leave the masticating for other less pernickity people to go through with. We may be an old maid, but it is too late now for us to learn to like new things.

It seems that in the making of rubber stamps a preparation known as "flong" is necessary. Mr. Sloane assures us that anyone who has watched the stereotyping of a large daily newspaper knows what "flong" is. Perhaps our ignorance is due to the fact that we were on the editorial end of a daily newspaper and went down into the composing-room only when it was necessary to rescue some mistake we had made from the forms. At any rate, we didn't know what "flong" was and we don't want to know. A man must keep certain reticences these days or he will just have no standards at all left.

It is not generally known how simple it is to make things out of rubber. "The writer has obtained excellent results from pieces of an old discarded bicycle tire. The great point is to apply a heavy pressure to the hot material. Many other articles can be thus produced extemporaneously" (page 78). This should lend quite a bit of excitement to the manipulation of india rubber. Imagine working along quietly making, let us say, rubber type and then finding that, extemporaneously, you had a rubber Negro doll or balloon on your hands! A man's whole life could be changed by such a fortuitous slip of the rubber.

Not the least of Mr. Sloane's contributions to popular knowledge is his sly insertion, under the very noses of the authorities, of what he calls the "Old Home Receipt" (ostensibly for "roller-composition", but we know better, eh, Mr. Sloane?). The "Old Home Receipt" specifies "Glue 2 lbs. soaked over night, to New Orleans molasses 1 gallon. Not durable, but excellent while it lasts". We feel sure that we have been served something made from this "Old Home Receipt", but would suggest to Mr. Sloane that he try putting in just a dash of absinthe. It makes it more durable.

* * *

We can recommend Laurence Vail Coleman's *Manual for Small Museums* to all those who have received or are about to give small museums for Christmas. Having a small museum on your hands with no manual for it is no joke. It sometimes seems as if a small museum were more bother than a large one, but that is only when one is tired and cross.

From Mr. Coleman's remarkably comprehensive study of small museums, we find that, as is so often in the case, income is a very serious problem. In financing special projects for the museum, such as the purchase of bird groups (if it is a museum that *wants* bird groups), there is great play for ingenuity, and Dr. Abbott of the San Diego Museum of Natural History, tells of how they, in San Diego, met the problem:

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The little cases containing bird-groups were offered to tradespeople in the city for display in their windows, the understanding being that the store should pay $50 for the advertising value. Thus, a meadowlark group representing the male in very bright dress, the female, the nest and eggs, was paid for by a men's and women's clothing store and displayed in its window in the early spring with the slogan: "Take a pointer from the birds. Now is the time for your new spring clothes". A savings-bank took a woodpecker group, showing the storing away of acorns, and a California shrike group (Dr. Abbott ought to know) showing a rather sanguinary example of empaling surplus prey on the spines of a cactus, both displayed under the euphemistic caption "The Saving Instinct" and "Are You Providing for the Future by storing up your dollars [or cadavers] now?" A bush-tit's nest was taken by a real-estate firm and a mocking-bird group by a music house. The local lodge of Elks gave $1200 for a case holding four elks (not members) and so, in time, the entire housing of the groups was accomplished and paid for. We are crazy to know what business houses paid for the rabbit and owl exhibits.

In the chapter on "Protection from Pests" we looked for a way of dealing with the man in an alpaca coat who grabs your stick away from you as you enter the museum and the young people who use museums for necking assignations, but they were not specified. A blanket formula is given, however, which ought to cover their cases: "The surest way to get rid of pests is to fumigate with hydrocyanic acid in an airtight compartment, but this is a dangerous procedure which has resulted in a loss of human life." [Why "but" ?] "Another fumigant that is widely used is carbon bisulphide, but this is highly explosive and has caused serious accidents". This presents a new problem to museum-visitors and would seem to make the thing one of the major risks of modern civilization. If a person can't be safe from asphyxiation and mutilation while looking at bird-groups, where *is* one to be safe? It would almost be better to let the pests go for a while, at least until the museum gets started.

* * *

A collection of verse entitled *Through the Years With Mother,* compiled by Eva M. Young, makes a nice gift which might perhaps be given to Father. It contains most of the little poems which have been written about mothers and the general tone of the thing is favorable to motherhood. One, entitled "A Bit O' Joy", veers off a little into child-propaganda, but probably would rank as a mother-poem too, for it is presumably the mother who speaks:

Just a Bit-a-Feller,
Lips a bit o' rose,
Puckered sort o' puzzled like,
Wonder if he knows—

There is one more verse explaining what the Bit-a-Feller might possibly know, but we didn't go into that. Another one which we left for reading on the train was entitled: "Muvvers" and begins:

One time, I wuz so very small,
I prit' near wuzn't there at all—

We cannot tell you what even the first two lines are of "Mama's Dirl".

* * *

The introduction to *Are Mediums Really Witches?,* by John P. Touey, begins by saying: "The sole purpose of this book, as its title suggests, is to prove the existence of a personal evil force and demon intervention in human affairs". This frightened us right at the start, for we are very susceptible to any argument which presupposes a tough break for ourself. There must be *some* explanation for what happens to us every time we stick our head out doors—or in doors, for that matter.

Mr. Touey begins with witchcraft in ancient times and comes right straight down to the present day. Even though he quoted "no less an authority than Porphyrius" in his earlier chapters, it was not until we got into the examples of modern people having their bed-clothes pulled off and their hats thrown at them that we began to feel uneasy. The story of the terrible time had by the Fox Sisters in Hydesville, N. Y., seemed pretty conclusive to us at the time of reading (2:15

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A.M. this morning) and, frankly, we stopped there. And, believe it or not, a couple of hours later, during our troubled sleep, *something* pulled the bed-clothes out from the foot of *our* bed, and we awoke with a nasty head-cold.

We will pay $100 to Mr. Touey or Sir Oliver Lodge or anyone else who can help us locate the personal demon who has been assigned to us. We would just like to talk to him for five minutes, the big bully!

* * *

We can quote but one example of the fascinating problems presented in John A. Zangerle's *Principles of Real Estate Appraising*, as we are limited in our space assignment, but perhaps from it the reader may get some idea of the charm of the book:

"Mr. Flanagan of New Zealand values this interest on the basis of an annuity using the 5% interest tables. Calculating the value on a 6% basis he would proceed as follows: Lessor receives $6000 per annum for ten years the present value of which is 6000 × 7.36 equals $44,160; plus the present value of $12,000 per annum for 89 years commencing ten years hence which is 12,000 × 9.254 (16.614—7.36) equals $111,048. Lessor is also entitled to receive either possession or rent after 99 years have expired, the reversionary value of which can be taken at $12,000 × 16.667 less 16.614 or .053 equals $636. Thus $111,048 plus $44,160 equals $155,844, the value of the lessor's interest."

How do you mean 16.614, Mr. Flanagan? Aren't you forgetting depreciation?

* * *

For those who like to browse along lazily with British royalty, we can think of no less charming a way than to accompany Helen, Countess-Dowager of Radnor, through her 361 page book: *From A Great-Grandmother's Armchair.* We had almost decided not to begin it at all, until we read in the Countess-Dowager's preface: "At the present time I am resting 'on my oars' (or rather, in my Armchair) at my quiet country home, which, amongst those of the third generation, goes by the name of 'Grannie's Peace-pool' ". This gave us incentive to read further.

And what a treat! "Grannie" certainly has earned her "peace-pool" after the exciting life she has led. Every year of her long career is given here in detail and it must make fascinating reading for the Radnors if only as a record of where the Countess left her umbrella that time in Godalming and who played zither in her "Ladies' String Band and Chorus" in 1879.

Among other things that are cleared up in this volume is the question of what the Countess did during those first hectic weeks of July, 1901.

"A good many engagements were crowded into the first fortnight of July," she writes modestly, "before going back to Venice, among other things I passed a very pleasant week-end at Wendover Lodge with Alfred and Lizzie Gatty."

But the book does not dwell entirely in the past. Right up to the present day we have disclosures of equal importance. In September, 1920, while visiting in Bath, the following incident occurred:

"One Sunday I started off in the car to go and lunch with Mrs. Knatchbull. When we had gone a few miles, however, the car broke down, a 'rubber-washer' having perished and let the water through! We telephoned for a 'Taxi' which took me back to Bath, and the car was towed back. Later in the afternoon Mrs. Knatchbull sent a car for me to go over to tea, and I flew over hill and dale and reached her place in Babington in half an hour."

So you see, the Countess really *had* intended to lunch with Mrs. Knatchbull!

We neglected to mention that the authoress is by birth a Chaplin; so she probably can get free seats whenever Mary's boy Charlie comes to town in a picture.

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SUNDAY DINNER

By Janet Lewis

MR. and Mrs. Guidicatti drove in at the gate, past the house, into the back yard. They stopped the car and got out. The house was on one side of them, small, unpainted, a reddish brown from the weathering of the wood, and the barn at the other, a high, unfinished structure. A big black and white dog, furry, his hair all over his eyes, got up slowly from the hard hot ground, and wagged his tail dubiously. The back door opened, and Mrs. Perault stepped out on the porch.

"Hello there," she said. "You're right on time and everything."

"Had a fine ride down," said Mr. Guidicatti. "Where's the old man?"

"Out among the rabbits," said Mrs. Perault.

"I'll go fetch him in," said Mr. Guidicatti. He crossed the trampled ground, avoiding stepping on a brood of little yellow ducks, and disappeared behind the barn.

His wife went up the short steep flight of the back steps, her coat over one arm, her pocket-book in one hand, and a crushed brown paper parcel in the other, and was embraced by Mrs. Perault. The women went into the house. In the back entry was an electric washing-machine, and a stack of mops and brooms. They went into the living-room, passing through the kitchen. The kitchen took up half of the back of the house, the living-room half of the front. There was a table in the middle of the room, and a sideboard in one corner. On the table were school-books, papers, chewed stubs of pencils, a few marbles, a vase of zinnias, a little boy's jacket. On the sideboard were four rows of silver trophy cups, all sizes and shapes. There were two cot beds, some chairs and an upright piano. There were potted plants on the floor and on the window sills. It was a small room.

Mrs. Guidicatti dropped her coat, pocket-book, and parcel on one of the cots and sat down on the other. She took a deep breath, stretched herself a little, and patted her hair. She was a fine-looking woman of about thirty-five, with an alert strong face, and a sort of potential emotionalism. Her hair was short. She wore it parted in the middle and brushed back smoothly behind her ears. She had a high forehead and her hair was very black. A small short-coated white dog followed them into the room and sniffed at Mrs. Guidicatti's feet. Its hinder end was almost hairless and entirely coated with a soft tarry material. Mrs. Guidicatti looked down at it.

"Why, what happened to Midge?"

"Upset a kettle of boiling water on himself. There wasn't much of him before and there's less now. How's the city?"

"Cold. Devilish cold. We're going to take a vacation. What do you think of that! I'm just too mad."

"How so?"

Perault and Guidicatti were coming in through the kitchen. Guidicatti was a little man. His forehead ran back in two points into his hair. His skin was dark and he wore a small black moustache. His wife said, "I'm telling Mary how we have to take a vacation".

"Oh, yes," he said in a slow gentle voice. "It's very annoying. It's on account of the union. I fiddled on Sunday in a cafeteria."

Guidicatti played the violin in the San Francisco Symphony Orchestra, and his wife played the harp.

"What of that? What of that?" said Perault, his voice sonorous and sudden. "Is it a blue law?"

"No, it's the union," said Guidicatti patiently. "They only let us work six days a week."

"What do you think of that?" said Mrs. Guidicatti. "They won't let a man work as he likes. They won't let him do anything. *A bas* the union. You can't call your teeth your own."

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Perault was getting out glasses and a bottle of red wine. The air was warm and full of the odor of cooking food.

"And these unions," said Mrs. Guidicatti, "anybody can belong to them that won't work. Musicians! They let people in that couldn't play 'Come to Jesus' on a barrel organ."

Perault brought her a glass of wine. He was extremely handsome, very tall, his hair crisp and grizzled, having a decided wave. His nose started straight from the middle of his forehead with no dip between the eyes—the sort of nose technically known as Roman, but decidedly more Gallic than Roman. His eyes were dark and quick and his color ruddy.

He said, bowing, "Drown your sorrows, eh, Gemma? Let us forget the union".

She smiled, taking the glass, showing her teeth brightly. "And the rabbits," she said, "how are the little rabbits?"

"Splendid," he said. "I have forty-two rabbits at the state fair, and I take forty-one prizes. Not so bad, eh?"

"And the little rabbit that didn't get a prize, he was very sad, I suppose?"

"You don't understand, Gemma. You don't understand how it happens."

Mrs. Perault had gone into the kitchen. She stood by the coal range, stirring a fricassee. Guidicatti brought her a glass of wine. She didn't want it.

"Oh, come, just once. It won't do you a bit of harm."

"It won't do me a bit of harm not to, either."

"You always say the same thing."

"So do you."

He leaned against the door jamb, drinking the wine himself, talking to his wife and Perault in the one room and to Mary Perault in the other. Outside the house the fields were dry and fragrant. About the distance of five blocks away the railroad, a line of waving eucalyptos, a few houses, the edge of town. The meadowlarks were singing. In the kitchen the big table was spread with a white cloth and set with plates and glasses. The sun winked in the empty dishes. The kitchen was snug. Through the open windows a cool, dry, spicy air blew in from the fields. Guidicatti sipped the wine and liked everything very much.

A little square-headed boy with white hair and brown eyes had followed the tarry dog into the room, and was standing behind his mother now, keeping very still and well barricaded, and smiling unceasingly. When the three other children came in they all sat down to dinner. Chairs scraped. Everyone was talking. Mary Perault stood by the stove dishing up rabbit fricassee and steamed summer squash. She passed the plates to one of the boys, who tilted back in his chair, taking them over his shoulder, and passed them on to the different places at the table. The little boy, Jamie, was sitting next to Mr. Perault. He rubbed his head against his father's elbow. There were two older boys and a girl of about sixteen, Melanie. Jamie said something to Mr. Perault.

"What did you say, my dear little son? My dear little son, you must learn to talk plainly," said Perault in his rich French voice.

The child repeated his remark, rubbing his head along his father's arm.

"What did he say, Auguste?"

The oldest boy said lazily, "He said he made a wheelbarrow with a wheel and it worked". His face was dark and shrewd.

"Bravo, my dear little son, bravo."

"Aristide," said Mrs. Guidicatti to Mr. Perault, "you have an accent like pea soup."

"The child has also an accent, that is all," added Guidicatti. "It is the accent of his own country. We do not live there."

Mrs. Perault banged a pan on the stove, and took her place at the table. They were very crowded. They began to eat at once.

Mary Perault was perhaps forty years old. Her body was strong and rigid and thick, like the trunk of a tree. Her face was fresh, and a certain joyous tender look rose quickly into her eyes every so often. When Guidicatti saw this look he was always surprised that he had not noticed what a good-looking woman she was. She had the sort of face that has been scoured for generations by north wind, icy rain, and sea fog. Although she had been in California for twenty years you could see all the climate of Scotland by looking at Mary Perault's face.

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The dinner was very good. They ate a great deal, talking and laughing. They had another bottle of red wine, and when dinner was over Guidicatti smoked a cigar. They were all sitting around the table, leaning back in their chairs, or leaning forward with their elbows on the table. Guidicatti said, puffing at his cigar, extremely good humored, "Wouldn't you do well to have two more children in this family? Two nice little children, one four and one five, quiet and well-behaved?"

"Oh, my dear God," said Perault, "do you not really think we have enough trouble in this family as it is?"

"I have a friend," said Guidicatti, "a charming Frenchwoman."

"Yes, she is charming," said Mrs. Guidicatti.

"Her husband is not good to her," resumed Guidicatti, "so she is leaving him to earn her own living. Then she has the children to care for and she cannot take them with her. She can get a good job as a personal maid, without the children, but with the children—nothing. So she must find a good home for them, where she can pay to have them looked after."

"So they are French children, eh," said Perault.

"And Japanese," said Mrs. Guidicatti.

"Oh, my dear God," said Perault, "what kind of a woman is that, to get a Japanese father for French children!"

"A very nice woman," said Mrs. Guidicatti, "just like you or me or anybody."

Melanie was interested. Mary Perault said, "It would be too bad not to help her if she can't find anyone else to take them".

Perault gave a magnificent snort, like a sea lion. Mrs. Guidicatti shook her napkin at him, and Mrs. Perault began to clear the table. Mr. Guidicatti went off with Perault. The boys hung around the kitchen for a while with Melanie and the two women. They were teasing Melanie about her new fellow. She liked it. She sat on the table, swinging her legs and talking back to them in a strong loud voice. She had on a pale green dress of georgette, green kid shoes, and no stockings. The dress had no sleeves, but a very wide bertha fell across the upper arm. The wind blowing intermittently through the kitchen windows lifted the light stuff and showed the length of the arms, the skin bright with life.

"You're a disgraceful hussy," said Mrs. Guidicatti. "You don't wear any clothes and you have a new fellow every week. When are you coming up to see me?"

"Can't come till the season's over," said Melanie.

"What season?"

"At the cannery. Can't come until I have some money to spend."

"Well, we are going on a vacation next week. Vittorio must go up the Russian River, for a place to go. From one cold place to a colder. But I tell you, Melanie, you should be careful. You are very pretty, and if you go around half naked all the time you will find yourself losing all moral restraint, and then you will catch horrible diseases. Your teeth will fall out, and you will lose your mind gradually, and die a horrible death."

"And Sodom and Gomorrah," said Mrs. Perault, pouring scalding water into the dish pan. "Do you hear that, Melanie? Sodom and Gomorrah will be nothing to you."

"And you do not help your poor hard-working mother even with the dishes," wound up Gemma Guidicatti.

"Here's Jack," said Auguste. "Here's your fellow."

"Oh," said Melanie, running out of the room. She came back with her hat in her hand, a big-brimmed green straw. "Well, good-by, Auntie Gemma; good-by, Ma."

"Good-by," said Mrs. Guidicatti. "I brought you a dress. It's in the front room. Be careful of horrible diseases."

"Thanks a lot. Good-by." She went outdoors. The boys leaned out of the window, kidding her. Jack's car was making a racket in the yard.

"Let me help you with the dishes now, Mary."

"No, no, you're not going to work today. Sit down in a chair and talk to me," said Mrs. Perault.

"All right, then; if I can't help I'm going to fix this dress. The sleeves aren't in right. Where's your work-basket?"

"In my room on the bed. Edward, get it for your Auntie Gemma."

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He brought it to her, smiling and mocking. His hair was too long, growing down in soft blond points on his brown neck. He was very handsome, like his father, but not so dark. He had a soft downy muzzle.

"Now get out of here, the two of you," said Mrs. Guidicatti. "I want to take off my dress."

She shoved them out and shut the door.

"The worst of those children," she said to Mrs. Perault, "is that they're just little Japs. To look at them you wouldn't think there was a drop of French blood in their bodies."

"Don't tell that to Perault. That would be the end of their ever coming here."

"What made her marry him," said Mrs. Guidicatti, "it was just after the war, and he was in Paris. All her people were killed in the war and she hadn't a speck of money. At her age, and the way she was brought up, she didn't know what else to do. He's a perfect gentleman. I've met him. He's charming to meet." She was sitting near the window. She had on a peacock-blue satin slip that made her bared shoulders and arms look very white. She bent her head over the sleeve she was ripping from the dress.

"What did he do to her to make her leave him?" said Mrs. Perault.

"It was what he did to other women. She says he's always nice to her, but he's all the time going off with these Japanese women. She says if she could have it out with him she might be able to get along, but he won't fight with her. Just starts putting his arms around her and loving her this way and that. But you know," she said, puzzled, looking up from her work, "I think it's more the difference in physique. They weren't mated, you know."

Mrs. Perault nodded. "Well," she said, "it's a strange business she would marry him, anyway."

"Yes, it is so," said Gemma.

Mrs. Perault went on wiping dishes, and Mrs. Guidicatti, having ripped out both sleeves, basted them in again and tried the dress on. One sleeve looked very well. The other looked as bad as ever. She was having a hard time with it. She ripped the basting and tried again.

As she worked, she said, "Guess what: I'm going to have a new harp".

They talked about cooking. Mrs. Perault said, "A carrot in almost anything will make it taste so much sweeter. The little Italian woman next door, she puts a pinch of rosemary into almost everything she cooks". Mrs. Guidicatti sewed and ripped. She said, "That harp is going to cost me seven hundred even".

"Imagine that," said Mrs. Perault. "I can't imagine putting so much money into just a harp. Though Dad would put that much into a rabbit, if he could."

"It'll be worth it," said Mrs. Guidicatti, "financially and artistically."

The men had spent the afternoon in the shade of the barn. Far away across the dry fields a line of sand-colored mountains with violet and air-blue shadows loomed through a curious silver haze. The fields seemed to be the floor of a level valley. In the opposite direction another line of hills, more massive, darker, wooded at the summits, rose, ridge by ridge, to be the barrier to the sea.

They talked about the union. "With the rabbit business," said Perault, "that is exactly what we need. If we would only stick together, it wouldn't be rabbits selling for something one year and for nothing the next, so you never know where you are. I have good rabbits. I have just about the best rabbits on the coast. Does that do me any good? No. For why? We don't stick together."

Guidicatti sighed deeply. He had a sympathetic nature, but he hated to belong to a union. These economic questions he was never sure about.

"Come and see my rabbits," said Perault, "you never did see them all."

They walked among the hutches. Dinner had been late. They had wasted the afternoon without effort, and the air was dimming ever so faintly. The rabbits looked out at them with bright hard eyes. The little ones hopped about, making tiny soft thuds. Perault opened the hutches and took out his prize rabbits, one after the other. There were brown ones, pure white ones, white ones hooded with black, gray ones.

"This fellow, he's my best buck," said

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Perault, "and this fellow, he's a Belgian Blue. Look at him." He held the animal up by the nape of its neck. It was gray, a gray so deep, so pure, so glossy, that it was really blue, a wonderful color. "How do you like him?" said Perault. "Here, lift him, he's a gentle one." Guidicatti held out his hands, feeling slightly nervous and not wishing to appear so. Come to think of it, he had never touched a rabbit before, that he could remember. Perault put it into his hands slowly. The creature was very heavy, the fur warm under its surface coolness; under the fur the flesh, quivering, full of moving blood, little nerves, sinews.

A meadowlark on the fence near them suddenly let out a burst of song. It was so sudden, so loud, so near, that Guidicatti felt as if he had touched the full throbbing throat. He felt in his hands the liveness of the rabbit, the song, the quivering warm breast of the lark. He was very startled and strangely alarmed. He gave the rabbit back to Perault, who shut it into its dark box. All the way back to the house he felt it in his hands.

In the kitchen Mrs. Perault was tying up boxes of eggs for them to take back to the city. There was also a basket of small dull yellow pears. She began to tell them as they entered, "Gemma spent the whole afternoon remodeling her dress. She took both sleeves out and put them back again inside out".

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WHEN KEATS DISCOVERED HOMER

By J. Middleton Murry

GREAT poems have a trick of springing fully armed, like Jove, from the head of Minerva. They are there, dropped at our feet like thunderbolts, without precedents or pedigrees: and we must make the best of them. We accept them as happenings, and neglect them as creations. We have no choice, for there is seldom any evidence available concerning the process of creation. To the poet himself, for the most part, his poem is a thing given: his subsequent workings upon it are conscious enough, and sometimes these are permanently recorded in the erasions of his manuscript, but the substance of the thing is beyond his conscious control. The essential activity of poetic creation is either sub- or superconscious.

If then it is sub- or superconscious, how can we, how can the poet himself, investigate the act of poetic creation? We read his poem; if it is a great poem, it moves us greatly. But what do we mean by that? I am moved greatly by a man's actual death which I behold; I am moved greatly by the description of a man's death—Antony's in *Antony and Cleopatra,* for example. Is the emotion the same? No. Is it even of the same kind? I doubt it. And if we could define the nature of the great emotion which a great poem awakens in us, can we, have we the right to, say that the emotion which we feel in reading, the poet himself felt in writing, his poem? Certainly it is easier to make the assumption than to justify it.

Yet if we once suffer ourselves to be caught in these preliminary speculations we shall not shake off their toils. Let us shun abstraction as long as we can, and contemplate a poem at birth—Keats's Sonnet "On First Looking into Chapman's Homer". It is worth contemplating for many reasons—because it is one of the greatest sonnets in the English language; then for reasons which gain weight and urgency because of this: because it is the first great poem that Keats wrote; because he wrote it at an incredibly early age—in the very month that he became twenty-one; because it was to take him many months, even of his brief and pregnant poetic life, to reach such certain mastery again; and finally because he wrote it with an astonishing speed. There are not many poems so well worth contemplating as this one.

But before we contemplate it, let us have in mind the story of its composition. We owe the story to the friend of his youth, Charles Cowden Clarke, his young schoolmaster and intimate. The poem was written in October 1816. In 1816 Keats had left school some five years; he had served his apprenticeship to Hammond, the surgeon, at Edmonton, and had been living for some time in the Borough, studying for a diploma in medicine at Guy's Hospital, and also writing verses.

Keats and Cowden Clarke were in the habit of meeting together for literary discussion. One day in October, Clarke was lent a copy of Chapman's Homer in folio, and Keats was immediately summoned over in the evening to Clarke's lodging in Clerkenwell to share the feast. They read Chapman together till dawn; then Keats went home to his lodgings in Cheapside, whither he had but lately moved out of the Borough. At ten o'clock in the morning Clarke found the sonnet on his breakfast table.

That Clarke's narrative is substantially true seems plain from the attendant circumstances he gives. The particulars of the achievement had, very naturally, made a deep impression upon him. He was at the time Keats's most intimate friend, and he had been scarcely less excited than Keats himself by the opportunity of reading Chapman. (There were no cheap reprints in those days—you had your Chapman in folio, or not at all.) And Clarke remembered turning up the shipwreck at the end of

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the fifth Odyssey and Keats's "delighted stare" at a truly magnificent phrase:

Then forth he came, his both knees falt'ring, both
His strong hands hanging down, and all with froth
His cheeks and nostrils flowing, voice and breath
Spent to all use, and down he sank to death.
The sea had soaked his heart through. . . .

It is exactly the phrase that would have brought a "delighted stare" into Keats's eyes. The quality of Clarke's memory of this particular occasion is evident: we may rely upon it.

There is no need to make the vain effort to establish precisely how long it took Keats to write his sonnet. The important facts are simple. It was written between day-break and breakfast—some time in October 1816, the month when Keats became twenty-one: it is one of the great sonnets in the English language; and it was the first great poem Keats wrote. If the word "inspiration" is ever to be used in literary criticism it might be used with some propriety here.

II

Now let us look at the sonnet as Cowden Clarke found it on his breakfast table that October morning. Three hours before there was nothing: now a masterpiece, a possession for ever, has been dropped into the lap of the world. It has not quite all the perfections of its final form. By one whole line, and one perfect epithet, it differs from the sonnet with which we are familiar.* But even if these had never been changed, the sonnet would still hold its sovereign place in English poetry:

Much have I travelled in the realms of gold
And many goodly states and kingdoms seen,
Round many a Western island have I been
Which bards in fealty to Apollo hold;
Oft of one wide expanse had I been told
Which deep-browed Homer ruled as his demesne
Yet never could I judge what men could mean
Till I heard Chapman speak out loud and bold.
Then felt I like some watcher of the skies
When a new planet swims into his ken;
Or like stout Cortez, when with wond'ring eyes
He stared at the Pacific,—and all his men
Look'd at each other with a wild surmise—
Silent, upon a peak in Darien.

What is the impression produced by the sonnet upon us? Impressions of this sort are hard to define: but here one seems to be predominant and recognizable.

We receive an impression of excitement so intense that the declared and actual subject of the poem is as it were dissolved away by it. It is almost impossible not to forget that it is all about a book—Chapman's translation of Homer. There is a direct communication of emotion, which grows swifter and swifter, till in the final picture of Cortez, half-visual, half-abstract, it touches a consummation: the image is not merely stamped upon our minds by the emotional force of the poem, but the image gathers up, clinches, makes tangible, the emotional content of the poem. Cortez on the peak—it is the perfect culmination of the sonnet. All that the sonnet really means is crammed into that final image: it is the flower of the plant, the purpose and the essence of the created thing.

Let us leave this for a moment, and examine the sonnet more coldly, putting aside, if we can, the immediate and overwhelming impression. We observe that the imagery of exploration and discovery is maintained from the beginning.

Much have I *travelled* in the realms of gold,
And many goodly states and kingdoms seen,
Round many western islands have I been . . .
Oft of one wide expanse had I been told. . . .

* In the final form line 7 became "Yet never did I breathe its pure serene"; and line 11, "Or like stout Cortez, when with eagle eyes". On the first of these changes a good deal of curious information might be given.

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From the first line the poet is a traveller, an explorer, voyaging among islands, discovering the realms of gold: he hears, on his travels, persistent rumors and reports of a great Eldorado. The word of the conquistadors is helpful; for the phrase "the realms of gold" is become so familiar, so much a part of current speech, that we forget that when Keats used it, it was original.* And it had come, I fancy, from the same reading whence came his picture of Cortez. "Eldorado" means simply "the realm, or the city, of gold". Keats was, to his own mind, a conquistador with Chapman's Homer for his new found land.

In the first two lines of the sestet,

> Then felt I like some watcher of the skies
> When a new planet swims into his ken.

the imagery is slightly changed—he becomes the explorer not of earth but of heaven—an astronomer who has discovered a new planet; but the change, instead of weakening the poem, quite definitely strengthens and enriches it: it gives an infinite extension to its imaginative scope—to the still unlimited earth the illimitable heavens are added, and by the exquisite use of the word "swims" is created an impression of ethereal stillness, a background of quiet translunary spaces, against which the figure of Cortez on his peak emerges with tremendous, and craggy, definition.

So that, on a colder examination, the immediate impression that the image of Cortez on the peak in Darien is the natural and, so to say, organic culmination of the poem, is fully substantiated. At the very outset Keats imagines himself as the explorer in search of Eldorado, and when finally he likens himself to the mightiest of the conquistadors, at the supreme moment of discovery, he has carried the imagery with which he began to the pinnacle of its potentialities.

It is one of the greatest sonnets in the English language: its immediate effect is startling: and perhaps this cold-blooded analysis has yielded some reason why this is so. The unity of the poem lies deep, and is *organic:* in the first line the last is implicit, as a flower is implicit in a seed. And this perfect unity is achieved by what appears, on still closer examination, an almost miraculous subtlety.

Considered in its imagery alone, as we have seen, the poem is a perfect whole—one single and complex metaphor, as intricate as it is clear: there is a real progression, as it were a crescendo, of the imagery which seems to grow out of itself. It completely satisfies Keats's own demand upon poetry, which he formulated eighteen months later:

"The rise, the progress, the setting of Imagery should, like the sun, come natural to him (the reader), shine over him, and set soberly, although in magnificence, leaving him in the luxury of twilight." (*Letter to Taylor,* 27 February, 1818.)

Almost certainly Keats, when he wrote those words, was not thinking of this sonnet, and yet there could not be a more exact description of its peculiar magnificence. The quality of his unconscious achievement had become, in eighteen months more, his conscious ideal. That happened often with Keats; it is, indeed, the most profound and persistent trait in his character, and this submission of the consciousness to the unconscious was to become, in his brief and dazzling maturity, not only his declared philosophy but the means by which he achieved his most consummate poetical perfections. And we may take "the progress and the setting of Imagery" in this sonnet as the concrete example in which we can glimpse the meaning of Coleridge's penetrating, but more intellectual, dictum, which is so often misinterpreted:

"Images, however faithfully copied from nature, and as accurately represented in words, do not of themselves characterize the poet. They become proofs of original genius only so far as they are modified by a predominant passion, or by associated thoughts and images awakened by that passion."

That is to say, imagery must not assume a *raison d'être* of its own; it must exist, not for its own sake, but as subordinated to the predominant emotion, which it has at once to obey, to express, and to communicate. Only in so far as it does this will it, in

* Leigh Hunt, in publishing the poem in *The Examiner,* Dec. 1816, objected to the vagueness of the phrase.

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Keats's words, "come natural to the reader": otherwise, it will merely distract him. In other words, on the side of the poet, the imagery and the emotion must be one: "rise, progress, and set" together, in a perfect accord.

And this, the most singular manifestation of original poetic genius, is the final wonder of Keats's sonnet. The unity of imagery and emotion is astonishing: in the octave, the imagery and emotion of eager exploration; in the sestet, the imagery and emotion of breathless discovery. The rhythm of the imagery precisely corresponds to, nay, is indistinguishable from, the rhythm of emotion: and with a subtlety truly miraculous. For mark: never have the true capacities of the Petrarchan sonnet form been more cunningly realized; the octave and the sestet have each their separate crescendo. The rhythm of imagery and emotion of the whole sonnet is reduplicated in either part. In the first, the silence of eager expectation and impotent surmise is triumphantly broken by

> Till I heard Chapman speak out loud and bold;

in the second, where a repetition of the actual effect is impossible, because Chapman's Homer has been discovered and the discovery cannot be undone, its equivalent is nevertheless compassed by a master-stroke of intuitive genius, by a sort of imaginative parallelism. The silence of infinite space is first suggested, and against that silence absolute, the silence of Cortez sounds like a thunder-crash.

Analysis will not carry us farther than this revelation of the intricate structure of the harmony which makes so single and so signal an effect upon us. And, paradoxically, the more the intricacy of the structure is realized, the more impossible it becomes to conceive that the poem was constructed deliberately as a watchmaker constructs a chronometer. The complexity, the more closely we comprehend it, the more obviously is the complexity of an organism. To find an analogue or explanation for it we are forced to go to the new-born animal, before whose birth there is indeed a long period of elaboration, but the elaboration is unconscious, and occurs in the darkness of the womb.

Yet, apart from the initial difficulty of applying such a theory to the genesis of a poem—namely, that if the elaboration is unconscious, *ex hypothesi* we can know nothing about it, and it must remain a pure conjecture—how is it possible to call such a theory to aid in the present case, when we know that Keats had read Chapman's Homer for the first time on the evening before he wrote his sonnet, and that he went on reading it till the break of day? Within two or three hours after that the sonnet was written.

III

Let us begin our inquiry by returning to the first immediate impression made by the sonnet. We are conscious of a certain discrepancy between the emotional content of the poem and its ostensible cause: as we have said, for the reader of the poem Chapman's Homer is, as it were, dissolved away in the intensity of the emotion it is supposed to have excited. That noble book, in its own quiddity, passes out of question; its function is not its own self-existence, but rather to be a symbol of something beyond itself, a point of crystallization for a condition of thought and feeling which existed in independence of it. Chapman's Homer, we feel, has served the office of a spark, to ignite a highly combustible gas in the poet's mind into a flash of perfect incandescence. The force of the explosion is as great as the flame is beautiful.

Of so much a sensitive reader is conscious through a simple submission of himself to the isolated sonnet. But if he goes further and reads it no longer in isolation but in its native setting among Keats's poetry of this period—that is to say, if he reads it in its place in Keats's first volume of poetry—the immediate impression becomes more definite. He becomes aware, at first perhaps only vaguely, that this particular sonnet, besides being the one perfect poem in that uneven and exciting book, is a perfect crystallization of a mood of thought and feeling which exists in solution throughout the volume. In the sonnet Keats succeeded in expressing, with

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a strange completeness and concision, a complex condition of thought and feeling which finds imperfect and partial utterance in nearly all his serious poems of the same period.

The condition is not easy to describe, it needs to be demonstrated; but we may call it, provisionally, the ardor of exploration and the excitement of discovery.

We are first aware of it as a baffled ardor of exploration of two different realms—Poetry and Nature. In the "Epistle to George Felton Matthew", written at the end of 1815, he cries:

> Far different cares
> Beckon me sternly from soft Lydian airs
> And hold my faculties so long in thrall
> That I am oft in doubt whether at all
> I shall again see Phoebus in the morning. . . .

Keats was, we must remember, working at medicine in the Borough. The Borough was a dirty place, and the lodgings of medical students there, to judge by Dickens's account of Bob Sawyer's rooms in Lant Street, took the color of their surroundings. In the same Epistle, Keats laments that even if he had the time for poetry, he could not write it there.

> But might I now each passing moment give
> To the coy Muse, with me she would not live
> In this dark city.

The darkness and the gloom forbid. From the first quotation it is already apparent that for Keats Nature and Poetry are one. "Soft Lydian airs" are the virtual equivalent of "seeing Phoebus in the morning". The idea that he might be the poet of a city of dreadful night never entered his head. Nature and Poetry are one; and he is chained prisoner from both. Again:

> O Solitude, if I must with thee dwell
> Let it not be among the jumbled heap
> Of murky buildings: climb with me the steep—
> Nature's observatory—whence the dell,
> Its flowering slopes, the river's crystal swell
> May seem a span. . . .

He had evidently broken his bonds for a moment and climbed out of the smoky Borough; his escape is more certain in another sonnet:

> To one who has been long in city pent
> 'Tis very sweet to look into the fair
> And open face of heaven,—to breathe a prayer
> Full in the smile of the blue firmament.

What had happened? He had found his way to Hampstead Heath; and not merely to Nature and Poetry in the simple sense, but to the company of a poet. Cowden Clarke had shown some of Keats's verses to Leigh Hunt, Hunt had been, as he himself tells us, "fairly surprised with the truth of their ambition and ardent grappling with nature",* and had invited Keats to his cottage in the Vale of Heath on the Heath. To Hunt's cottage Keats went often, in the spring of 1816, and stayed long. (Even his first visit, says Clarke, was prolonged into three morning calls.) He departed reluctantly. Two of his sonnets of 1816 are concerned with his journeys back to the Borough from Hunt's cottage. One describes, with singular charm, his walk back beneath the stars:

> Keen fitful gusts are whisp'ring here and there
> Among the bushes half leafless and dry,
> The stars look very cold about the sky
> And I have many miles on foot to fare.
> Yet feel I little of the cool bleak air
> Or of the dead leaves rustling drearily,
> Or of those silver lamps that burn on high,
> Or of the distance from home's pleasant lair:
> For I am brimfull of the friendliness
> That in a little cottage I have found;
> Of fair-haired Milton's eloquent distress
> And all his love for gentle Lycid drown'd;
> Of lovely Laura in her light green dress
> And faithful Petrarch gloriously crown'd.

We are fairly safe in dating that in the very month of the Chapman sonnet; and probably the other sonnet, definitely entitled "On

* *The Examiner*, Dec. 1, 1816.

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leaving some friends at an early hour" belongs to the same moment. In the first he had been brimful of friendly and excited talk of poetry as he shaped the lines of his long walk home; but the excitement was comparatively calm. In the second sonnet it could scarcely be controlled at all:

Give me a golden pen, and let me lean
On heaped-up flowers, in regions clear, and far;
Bring me a tablet whiter than a star. . . .

It is absurd, preposterous; but it comes off. The purity of sheer enthusiasm carries it:

The while let music wander round my ears,
And as it reaches each delicious ending,
Let me write down a line of glorious tone,
And full of many wonders of the spheres:
For what a height my spirit is contending!
'Tis not content so soon to be alone.

Such was the ambition with which his contact with Nature and Poetry together at Hampstead had filled him. But we have outrun chronology. We have passed from early spring to autumn. Let us go back to the spring: to his first meeting with Hunt.

Hunt published a poem of his—the sonnet on Solitude—on May 6, 1816, in *The Examiner*. No doubt to Keats, as to any common slave of the inkpot, publication was a tangible evidence of vocation. His mind forsook his gallipots, once and for all. He must be with Nature and Poetry. He walked the Heath; he stood tiptoe upon his little hill, by the gate which leads from the Heath to the field by Ken Wood. It was not enough. He must go away. And away he went, to Margate—to something he had not seen before, the sea. In August he writes an "Epistle" to his brother George:

Full many a dreary hour have I passed,
My brain bewildered, and my mind o'ercast
With heaviness: the seasons when I've thought
No sphery strains by me could e'er be caught
From the blue dome.

Again, Nature and Poetry are one: the sphery strains are caught direct from the blue dome. All his three Epistles, to Matthew, to George, to Cowden Clarke, are concerned with a single theme, his consuming ambition to write poetry, and his conviction that poetry is somehow directly created in the poet's soul by Nature. Nature is poetry —"The poetry of earth is never dead"—but to his knowledge of nature one thing is now added—the ocean. "E'en now," he writes to George,

E'en now I am pillared on a bed of flowers
That crowns a lofty cliff, which proudly towers
Above the ocean waves. . . .

So in his Epistle the simple fact; in his sonnet of the same time to the same brother George, he tells of the significance.

The Ocean with its vastness, its blue green,
Its ships, its rocks, its caves, its hopes, its fears,
Its voice mysterious, which whoso hears,
Must think on what will be and what has been.

Let us pause to gather together the scattered threads of this tumultuous condition of thought and feeling. A double excitement was fermenting in Keats: the excitement of a discovery of nature and of a far fuller discovery of poetry. But the excitement is one, and its unity finds lovely utterance in the lines of "I stood tiptoe upon a little hill".

Open afresh your round of starry folds
Ye ardent marigolds!
Dry up the moisture from your golden lids
For great Apollo bids
That in these days your praises should be sung
On many harps which he has lately strung.

Keats's harp, we may be sure, was one of them. He is at once exploring nature and his own powers of poetry; and the two explorations are a single process. Elsewhere in the same poem his power of poetry is precisely identified with his power of response to nature. Nature creates her poet. The poet's mind is

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ever startled by the leap
Of buds into ripe flowers; or by the flitting
Of diverse moths, that aye their nest are quitting;
Or by the moon lifting her silver rim
Above a cloud, and with a gradual swim,
Coming into the blue with all her light.

(There, unmistakably, is the naïve and charming bud of the full-flowered:

Then felt I like some watcher of the skies
When a new planet *swims* into his ken.)

And Keats goes on, after an apostrophe to the moon:

For what has made the sage or poet write
But the fair paradise of Nature's light?

So the ardor of exploration and the excitement of discovery become threefold: of the loveliness of nature, of the loveliness of poetry, and of his own power to utter the loveliness of nature in poetry. And as his excitement accelerates, so does his confidence in his own powers. In the sonnet "Great spirits now on earth are sojourning", there is no mistaking the reference of—

And other spirits there are standing apart
Upon the forehead of the age to come;
These, these will give the world another heart
And other pulses.

It is to himself.

Now let us take stock of our materials—what we have gathered toward the making of the Chapman sonnet. The moment is apt, for that spirit "standing apart Upon the forehead of the age to come" is singularly reminiscent of Cortez on his peak in Darien. We have the ardor of exploration, the excitement of discovery: of Nature, of Poetry, and of Keats's own powers of poetry. We have an ocean, that speaks to him unutterable things, upon which he looks down from a lofty cliff. We have, if not a planet, a moon, to whom he cries:

O maker of sweet poets, dear delight
Of this fair world and all its simple livers,

whom he had described first, in "Calidore",

Lovely the moon in ether, all alone,

and later as "swimming into the blue with all her light".

The discovery of poetry—the thing in itself, and his own powers of it—the discovery of the moon, the discovery of the ocean. Since Nature and Poetry are one to him, why should not all these be the same? But how to express these as discoveries? The moon had been discovered—why not a new planet? The ocean had been discovered—why not the ocean when it was unknown?

A good deal seems to be gathered together in Keats's unconsciousness. Can we follow it still nearer to the point of fusion?

Keats's longest and most ambitious poem of this year 1816 was "Sleep and Poetry". It was composed at intervals between the early autumn and the winter of the year. Part of it, perhaps the greater part of it, was written before the Chapman sonnet. In its entirety it belongs to the same moment, temporal and spiritual; and its occasion, characteristically enough, was a white night spent on the sofa at Hunt's cottage, where he lay thinking of poetry, with a picture of Petrarch and Laura before his eyes.

Most happy they!
For over them was seen a free display
Of outspread wings, and from between them shone
The face of Poesy: from off her throne
She overlook'd things that I scarce could tell.
The very sense of where I was might well
Keep sleep aloof: but more than that there came
Thought after thought to nourish up the flame
Within my breast: so that the morning light
Surprised me even from a sleepless night.
And up I rose refresh'd, and glad, and gay,
Resolving to begin that very day
These lines; and howsoever they be done
I leave them as a father to his son.

Naturally there is not much about sleep in the poem; as it was conceived in a night

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without sleep, so sleep in the poem is but the whiffler before the mighty king—Poetry. From the first we are conscious that the poet is straining to utter a conception of poetry too great for his words. He has had an intuition into a mystery, which he seeks again and again to declare. Poetry, he seems to be saying, is the instinctive response of the purified soul to the wonder and majesty of the Universe: through the poet the All finds voice.

To see the laurel-wreath, on high suspended,
That is to crown our name when life is ended.
Sometimes it gives a glory to the voice
And from the heart up-springs, rejoice! rejoice!
Sounds which will reach the Framer of all things
And die away in ardent mutterings.
No one who once the glorious sun has seen
And all the clouds, and felt his bosom clean
For his great Maker's presence, but must know
What 'tis I mean, and feel his being glow.

Suddenly comes the bitter thought that he may not live to achieve the poetry he dreams of, and he cries:

O for ten years, that I may overwhelm
Myself in poesy! so I may do the deed
That my own soul has to itself decreed.

Then, he tries to explain what the deed is. "First, the realm I'll pass of Flora, and old Pan", which indeed he did pass, though not as the crow flies, in "Endymion". But that indulgence of his delight in the loveliness of nature is only the prelude to his real purpose.

Yes, I must pass them for a nobler life
Where I may find the agonies, the strife
Of human hearts.

Clear enough, it seems; he will leave the world of nature, for the world of men and women. But the reason he gives is startling —"for lo! I see . . . a car". He has a vision of a chariot and a charioteer, who drives from the sky to the mountains, from the mountains to a concourse of "shapes of delight and mystery and fear", to whom he listens, "awfully intent". The detail of the vision is obscure; but it is plain that the charioteer is some strange embodiment of the spirit of Poetry, and that the vision meant much to Keats, for his next words are deeply felt:

The visions all are fled—the car is fled
Into the light of heaven, and in their stead
A sense of real things comes doubly strong,
And, like a muddy stream, would bear along
My soul to nothingness: but I will strive
Against all doubtings, and will keep alive
The thought of that same chariot and the strange
Journey it went.

So ends the first "movement" of the poem—an attempt to declare a mysterious significance of poetry, and a proclamation of his own intention to achieve it.

The second movement begins with the famous apostrophe:

Is there so small a range
In the present strength of manhood, that the high
Imagination cannot freely fly
As she was wont of old?

It is a vision of the present state of poetry in a country which had been its chosen home.

Who could paragon
The fervid choir that lifted up a noise
Of harmony, to where it aye will poise
Its mighty self of convoluting sound,
Huge as a planet, and like that roll around
Eternally around a dizzy void?

We note that the great English poetry of the past is imaged as a planet rolling round, and pass to his denunciation of the age of reason, that "blasphemed the bright lyrist to his face".

Ah, dismal-soul'd
The winds of heaven blew, the ocean roll'd

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Its gathering waves—ye felt it not. The blue
Bared its eternal bosom, and the dew
Of summer night collected still to make
The morning precious: Beauty was awake!
Why were ye not awake?

Again we note that response to the ocean, first seen by Keats a bare few weeks before, has become part of the acid test of true poetry. But now, he exults, the time of barrenness is past. There is a rebirth of Poetry, and he hopes that, before he dies, she will regain all her past glories.

So to the third "movement". He will be charged with presumption. (He was, and most venomously, by Byron.) He will hide from the thunderbolt, if he hides at all, in the midmost light of Poetry. Against all charges of presumption he vindicates himself by reiterating his claim that he *knows*.

What though I am not wealthy in the dower
Of spanning wisdom; though I do not know
The shiftings of the mighty winds that blow
Hither and thither all the changing thoughts
Of man; though no great ministering reason sorts
Out the dark mystery of human souls
To clear conceiving: yet there ever rolls
A vast idea before me, and I glean
Therefrom my liberty; thence too I've seen
The end and aim of Poesy.

We note that an ocean rolls, a planet rolls; but hardly an idea. But ocean, planet, and this idea were, by this time, all one to Keats's imagination. For this is the idea he has been trying to communicate throughout the poem —the idea of Poetry that he has discovered. He says so: "Thence too I've seen the end and aim of Poesy". And, though he cannot explain, it shines vast and lucid before him.

'Tis clear
As anything most true; as that the year
Is made of the four seasons, manifest
As a large cross, some old cathedral's crest
Lifted to the white clouds. Therefore should I
Be but the essence of deformity,
A coward, did my very eyelids wink
At speaking out what I have dared to think.
Ah, rather let me like a madman run
Over some precipice: let the hot sun
Melt my Daedalian wings, and drive me down
Convulsed and headlong.

Better any fate than deny his discovery of the idea, the planet, the ocean. Cortez stands on his peak, and can no other. He looks out before him. What does he see? It *is* an ocean, after all.

Stay, an inward frown
Of conscience bids me be more calm awhile.
An ocean dim, sprinkled with many an isle,
Spreads awfully before me. How much toil!
How many days! what desperate turmoil!
Ere I can have explored its widenesses.
Ah, what a task! upon my bended knees
I could unsay those—no, impossible;
Impossible.

By these devious ways we have followed Cortez-Keats while he has climbed the steep to the peak in Darien to discover with wondering eyes the dim ocean before him. With him we stare at the Pacific: it is not exactly Chapman's Homer, but rather his vast and rolling idea of poetry, and his own poetry to be; and if we are at all his men we feel the tremor of a wild surmise: surely not less thrilling because the Peak in Darien is found in the final inquiry to be situate somewhere between the cliffs of Margate and the heights of Hampstead Heath.

IV

But what can we claim to have accomplished by this inquiry? To have explained a great poem? Assuredly not. The act of composing the sonnet on Chapman's Homer remains unique and beyond analysis. But we can, I think, fairly claim to have substantiated the theory that the composition of a *great* poem is but a final conscious act super-

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vening upon a long process of unconscious elaboration.*

Can we, with the help of our evidence, more clearly define the nature of this process? What elements can we distinguish in it?

First and foremost, a predominant, constantly recurring complex of thought and emotion. Throughout the period of unconscious elaboration Keats had been continually discovering more and more of what was to him the highest reality: Nature, Poetry, the Nature of Poetry; and the continual discovery was accompanied by an incessant emotional excitement. Whether his successive acts of discovery can properly be called "thoughts" will depend upon the philosophy of the man describing them; they are certainly not syllogistic—syllogism can *discover* nothing—but "thoughts" they shall be for us, as they were for Keats:

> There came
> Thought after thought to nourish up the flame
> Within my breast. . . .

These successive thoughts (which some would call intuitions), accompanied by an incessant emotional excitement, form what Coleridge calls "a predominant passion", more exactly a persistent process of thought-emotion.

Second, in the service of this persistent thought-emotion the specific poetic-creative faculty has been continually at work to find means of expression for it. These means of expression are chiefly images derived from a series of particular sense-perceptions. Thus, the poet's first perception of the Moon:

> Lovely the moon in ether all alone

is refined to a subtler perception of her

> Lifting her silver rim
> Above a cloud, and with a gradual swim
> Coming into the blue with all her light.

And this sense-perception is used to enable the poet to grasp his own thought of the nature of poetry. The smooth and lovely motion of the moon is a quality of the poetry he conceives:

> More strange, more beautiful, more smooth, more regal
> Than wings of swans, than doves, than dim-seen eagle.

So the image of the moon becomes an image of his thought of poetry.

Again, he sees the sea for the first time, and that perception of the sea, with its attendant emotion, enables him once again to grasp his main thought, with its emotion. The image of the vast ocean also becomes an image of his vast "idea" of poetry. Nay more, the very sound of the sea,

> which whoso hears
> Must think on what will be and what has been

enables him to make audible, as the sight of the sea to make visible, his thought. Again, another aspect of his thought is grasped through the vision of himself standing alone on a cliff (at Margate) or on a hill (at Hampstead), staring with wondering eyes at the prospect before him. He is "a spirit standing apart upon the forehead of the age to come".

So the poet's mind has been accumulating through successive acts of sense-perception, a series of images which can be assimilated into the main process of his thought, and act as surrogates for it. And the condition of this assimilation is an emotional and qualitative correspondence. His perception of the moon is a delighted discovery, so is his perception of the ocean—in both the hidden loveliness of an unknown reality is revealed to him; therefore, both in the qualities discovered, and in the emotion awakened in discovering them, these sense-discoveries are analogous to the main thought—discovery of the nature of poetry. With his senses he discovers nature, with his thoughts he discovers the nature of poetry.

His two crowning sense-discoveries were those of the moon and sea, and those are instantly pressed into the service of his thought: the images of the moon and the ocean can serve at will to embody the objects of his thought. And he is able to think more

* "Unconscious" is here used quite arbitrarily, to denote a less complete awareness than that of the final act of creation. The nature of this "unconsciousness" is sufficiently defined in the course of the essay.

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exactly concerning the nature of poetry because the sensuous images of moon and ocean are become true symbols of the reality about which he is thinking. So that in the process of unconscious elaboration the continually progressing thought is given ever fresh definition and substance by the images it is able to assimilate; and on the other hand the images acquire a thought-content. The thought steadily gains focus and intensity; the images significance.

It is this mysterious process at which Coleridge is hinting when he says, truly enough, that "images, however beautiful, though faithfully copied from nature, and as accurately represented in words, do not of themselves characterize the poet. They become proofs of original genius only so far as they are modified by a predominant passion. . . ." "Assimilated to" is perhaps a better word than "modified by"; and "predominant passion" is a little misleading to a modern mind, for this "passion", as we have seen, is a recurrent activity of thought with a recurrent emotional "field". This "passion" is the specific and peculiar energy of "poetic thought"; which is able to unite a sense-perception and a thought-intuition—completely to fuse an image and an idea.

Suddenly this complex of thought and images, which is working itself towards an organic unity, is ejected into poetic form. What occasions this sudden birth? The dominant thought with its attendant emotion is given a final focus by a particular event. The discovery of the nature of poetry, which had been going on for months is consummated by the discovery of Chapman's Homer. Utterance becomes urgent, necessary, inevitable. The means are at hand—images long since assimilated to that dominant thought-emotion, of which the discovery of Chapman is the final instance and occasion.

But there is a final creative act. If this unconscious preparation were all, we should imagine Keats in his sestet saying: "Then felt I—as I did when I discovered the moon, as I did when I discovered the ocean". But the moon was discovered long ago, and so was the ocean. It will not do. It must be: "Then felt I—as a man who discovers a new planet, as a man who discovers a new ocean". Then to his need came the memory of Robertson's *America* which he had read as a schoolboy. An inexact memory—for as Tennyson pointed out, it was Balboa, not Cortez, who stared at the Pacific—but one definite enough to give the final perfection to his imagery.

Of the last act of poetic creation there is nothing to say. We cannot explain it; but it is no longer utterly miraculous. We have seen at least how the main materials lay ready prepared for the final harmonious ordering; part, and not the least part, of the final harmony had already been achieved; we may fairly say that the actual composition of this great poem was but the conscious last of a whole series of unconscious acts of poetic creation. And we may hazard the guess that it is this long period of unconscious preparation which distinguishes the great poem from the merely good one; that this is the reason why in a great poem the subject seems to be dissolved away in the incandescence of the emotion it kindles; and, finally, that this is the reason, why the depths of significance in a great poem are inexhaustible.

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By Dorothy Lathrop

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TWO SONNETS FROM GREECE

By Alice Morgan Wright

Eleusis

Time has swept bare as tide sweeps bare a shore
These stones that once upbore the ineffable rite,
The songs and torches of the sacred night
Throng to thy columned mysteries no more.
Persephone, lost child Demeter bore,
What swarthy god, what quenchless appetite
Still drags to death thy body's young delight?
What resurrection balances that score?

A baby goat heedless of bleatings suave,
White-hoofed amid the asphodel romps by,
The mysteries: corn springing from a grave,
Slaughter and birth, the unanswerable why:
That temple lifts its gabled roof god-high
And all the sky is its vast architrave.

Mycenae

Remote in ruin on the Argive plain
Rise citadel and Cyclopean wall,
Reft is the gold of royal burial,
Sunshine and wind and loveliness remain.
Poppies against gray rock like a refrain
Divide in song the grasses lyrical,
Singing that life and love enough for all
Mankind here find a rapturous domain;

Yet none but shapes of horror here deploy,
Of outraged passionate young hearts aghast,
Of jealous fury and avenging hates,
Nor ever ceased the clangor of the gates
When that stern-hearted Agamemnon passed
Under the lions to the war with Troy.

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THE EMBATTLED HUMANISTS

Introducing a New Character Into the Current Drama of Ideas

By Gorham B. Munson

IN 1918 Mr. Van Wyck Brooks read the elder American critics out of the new literary parties then forming in the United States. "They," and Mr. Brooks designated an odd grouping of Messrs. Paul Elmer More, Irving Babbitt, W. C. Brownell, George E. Woodberry, J. E. Spingarn, William Lyon Phelps and Stuart P. Sherman, "are unable to suggest any principles of order adapted to a spiritually unorganized society." Of those seven the first two, Messrs. More and Babbitt, represented classical viewpoints as purely as any modern critic can inherit and interpret them, and they were, though certainly not solely through the force of Mr. Brooks's declaration, seemingly banished for good from the center of American literary life.

But in 1928 Mr. More and Mr. Babbitt and the traditions they defend appear, quite unexpectedly, to be returning to favor. One can measure this; partly by the changed and now respectful tone of the reviewers in writing about their latest works: partly by the tendency to take them into account as a serious opposition, illustrated recently by Mr. Waldo Frank in his series of articles on the *Rediscovery of America:* partly by the influence and stimulation they seem to have exercised on certain writers such as Mr. T. S. Eliot and Mr. Wyndham Lewis. Mr. More and Mr. Babbitt have naturally shared in receiving part of the renewed general interest in programs of order in England, France and America.

This shift in the politics of current criticism is not, however, due to any campaign by the two elder critics. They have remained aloof in their university surroundings, preoccupied with the practices of their classical disciplines, quietly productive of further developments of the critical ideas they held in 1918. But meanwhile the outside world has been revolving through phases of naturalism, pure estheticism, and intellectual vaudeville, and the end of a decade finds a certain number of people disillusioned as to the progress daily reported to be taking place in American letters. This remnant has come to feel that there is scarcely any breadth of vision and very few generative ideas in contemporaneous American movements: it has therefore turned aside to read, questioningly, the classical views of Mr. More and Mr. Babbitt.

The moment was ripe for such an enterprise as the *Forum* magazine initiated in January of the year now ending. The *Forum* virtually declared war on "the facile penmen of *The American Mercury*" and enlisted the aid of "another school of critics in America whose skepticism resembles that of Montaigne, in that they doubt out of a greater faith". The result has been a series of five articles (to date) on modern literature and humanism which really signalizes the restoration of humanistic criticism to the main field of our intellectual life and has therefore an importance which extends beyond the covers of the magazine that housed it. But fortune was with the editors of the *Forum* and their readers even more than the preceding statement indicates, for the unfolding of ideas in this series has assumed a dramatic form and worked up to a crisis that is truly exciting to the mind of an inquirer.

Thus far I have been sketching the setting for this play of ideas. In my next section I propose to sum up what I take to be Act One and Act Two of the symposium, and after that to introduce into the situation arrived at the figure of my friend, Mr. Adam Sweord, who can, I believe, bind the crisis still tighter and prepare the problem of the *dénouement* for general debate.

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II

The personae of Act One were Mr. Paul Elmer More, Mr. Irving Babbitt, and Mr. Sherlock Bronson Gass (who, I may mention, since he is not so well known, is a professor of rhetoric at the University of Nebraska and the author of several books of essays). The theme was the long-standing dispute between romanticism and humanism.

Mr. More began with a pessimistic survey of the modern current in American literature. He has esteem, but not high praise, for Edith Wharton, Edwin Arlington Robinson and Robert Frost, but for the great majority of our authors his judgment is negative. Our newer writers, he observed, are united more by common dislikes than by positive preferences. "They are animated by a wholehearted contempt for New England Puritanism and all it means. . . . These then are the animosities that unite the otherwise centrifugal champions of liberty: hatred of Puritanism, rejection of 'moralism' and 'religionism', emancipation of art from the responsibilities of life."

Mr. More then divided the American "moderns" into two schools: the esthetic, represented in his paper by Amy Lowell and James Branch Cabell, and the realistic, exemplified by Theodore Dreiser, Sherwood Anderson, John Dos Passos, Edgar Lee Masters and Sinclair Lewis. His judgment of the esthetic school is that it makes "a divorce between the true in life and the beautiful in art which must spell death to any serious emotion in literature". His judgment of the realists is that in any broad sense they are insufficiently educated: "self-made men with no inherited background of culture" and therefore prey to one-sided theories of life. Of Mr. Dreiser, for example, he says: "If only he knew the finer aspects of life as he knows its shabby underside; if only his imagination had been trained in the larger tradition of literature instead of getting its bent from the police court and the dregs of science; if only religion had appeared to him in other garb than the travesty of superstition and faded fanaticism; if only he had had a chance, he might possibly have produced that fabulous thing, the great American novel".

Mr. More's language is unpopular nowadays and his sympathies are so remote from the American turmoil that he might almost be a visiting foreign critic mailing home a report on the state of letters in this republic. Against these traits the reader must deliberately exercise his good will and try to understand what really lies in Mr. More's, to us, almost alien mind. He will learn then that however Victorian the route by which Mr. More attains his estimates he is essentially sound in asserting that American literature of today "makes rather a sad story in the telling".

Or, as Professor Babbitt put it pithily in *The Critic and American Life (Forum,* February, 1928), American civilization requires a Socrates, and we get instead a Mencken. For words control the imagination of men and therefore it is needful to practise discrimination upon those general terms that serve as flags for popular movements. Mr. Babbitt took up a number of such words now rife in our environment—democracy, realist, Puritanism, service—and subjected them to a Socratic dichotomy in the interests of humanism. It quickly became apparent that here, in the failure of Mr. Mencken and the critics of his generation to analyze their general terms, was a main source of our present confusion, and the reason why Mr. Mencken and his allies were "temperamentalists" and self-expressive emerged. "The crucial point," said Professor Babbitt, "is one's attitude toward the principle of control. . . . What has tended to disappear is the inner life with the special type of control it imposes. . . . A view of reality that overlooks the element in man that moves in an opposite direction from mere temperament, the specifically human factor in short, may prove to be singularly one-sided. . . . The characteristic evils of the present age arise from unrestraint and violation of the law of measure and not, as our modernists would have us believe, from the tyranny of taboos and traditional inhibitions."

There is one paragraph in Professor Babbitt's essay that expresses the fundamental motivation of the drama we are delineating. It will sound through the second act as a kind of undertone to all that is said and it

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will provide in the unwritten third act the incentive for my friend, Mr. Sweord, to utter his thoughts. "Here is the issue on which all other issues finally hinge; for until the question of moral freedom—the question whether man is a responsible agent or only the plaything of his impulses and impressions—is decided, nothing is decided; and to decide the question under existing circumstances calls for the keenest critical discrimination. Creation that is not sufficiently supported by such discrimination is likely to prove premature."

Act One was finished, neatly and gracefully, by Mr. Gass in an essay entitled *Modernism and the Novel (Forum,* May, 1928). He mourned the passing of the Victorian novel with its delightful blending of tale, drama and essay, of plot, character and comment, and then named two causes for the modern novel. First, living novelists are dominated by artistic theories, and to the novelists Professor Gass said: "Art is simply the best way of accomplishing an end. With the end itself it has nothing to do". Willa Cather served for him as a case in point of one "whose fine talent has gone all to the service of a theory of literary effect". But, secondly, "art, the arbiter of means, would never have come to meddle with ends if, outside the workshop, the sense of ends had not grown dim, or vanished. A change has occurred in our tacit philosophy".

Science has caused the change. "We stand at the frontier, without a goal, and our habits of thought have taken color from the science that brought us there. For the man of science in his laboratory, the objective is a picture of the universe with man as an organic part of it. This universe is an accomplished thing. His concern, therefore, is limited to apprehending what is. With this attitude and habit of thought, what was left for the novel to do it has done—it has described with intense vividness the sensation of life . . . of which the latest phase is the depiction of the stream of consciousness."

With that we may let the curtain drop and adjourn for a brief remarking of the coherence that distinguishes the views of the three characters who have passed across our mental stage. They all agree that American literature is now repeating the movements (naturalism, realism, symbolism) which swept over England and France, thirty, forty, fifty years ago: they say that they are living through the same vogues twice. Belated romanticism! This is a phrase to ponder, before we are tempted to speak again of American literature as path-breaking. Then they are united, these three critics of wide experience in letters, in opposing the doctrine of self-expression and its sanctification of temperamental overflow. This doctrine they find damaging to literary technic and weakening to the writer's sense of responsibilities. Sacrifices are enumerated: loss of the interest that arises from a depiction of the duality of the individual—for which an obsessive interest in sex is poor compensation; loss of delicacy, distinction and elevation; loss of the hope of enduring appeal by failure to achieve the "grandeur of generality". Finally, they all come out for a new humanism, expressed by Mr. More as "a moral law of character", by Mr. Babbitt as a standard set above temperament, and by Mr. Gass as seeing "that the central problem, and hence the central interest, of life—since life and intelligence are given—is what to make of it, that is, what values to pursue in it?"

None of this can be novel intelligence to anyone who has studied with just a modicum of system the prolonged warfare between Classicist and Romanticist. But the second act is surprising, for it immediately introduces Mr. T. S. Eliot in the rôle of advocate for a religious point of view.

Here let me indulge in a parenthesis. I believe that the issues between Humanism and Romanticism have actually been settled, and settled more completely by Messrs. More and Babbitt in America than they have been in Europe. For that reason the argument with the Romanticists has become for me a sterile one: the men with red waistcoats cannot stand before the critical artillery trained on them, and the battle is now too one-sided to hold the detached spectator. But after I read Professor Babbitt's *Democracy and Leadership* in 1924, I fell to speculating on what should logically be his next book, and then the hope came that he would devote himself to a fortifying of the humanist position against the religious thinker. For impregna-

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ble as he is on the sides where romantic enemies foregather, he seemed to me unprotected from a really acute thrust from the religious quarter. The attack has come, and it is Mr. Eliot who leads it! Rumor has it that Mr. Eliot has become a Roman Catholic. I strongly doubt if this be true, but I do know that a change has been visible in his criticism. He no longer, as in *The Sacred Wood,* limits the critical response to the sensibility and the mind operating on the experiences of the sensibility. For he has announced that in our age the distinction between the creative and the critical has vanished, and the critic must nowadays be a perceiver and creator of values, must in fine become philosophic. In *The Humanism of Irving Babbitt (Forum,* July, 1928) he goes even further—as we shall perceive.

Mr. Eliot questions his former teacher, Professor Babbitt, very skilfully. Is humanism an alternative to religion or is it ancillary to it? Is not Professor Babbitt's doctrine of self control an attempt "to build a Catholic platform out of Protestant planks"? What are the devotees of humanism going to control themselves *for,* what ends are they going to will? Is a humanistic civilization feasible?

Mr. Eliot thinks that "humanism is merely the state of mind of a few persons in a few places at a few times": it is parasitical on religion. In regard to the doctrine of self control, he says: "If you distinguish so sharply between 'outer' and 'inner' checks as Mr. Babbitt does, then there is nothing left for the individual to check himself by but his own private notions and his judgment, which is pretty precarious". The humanist, he shows later, wishes to will civilization: however, "if you mean a spiritual and intellectual coördination on a high level, then it is doubtful whether civilization can endure without religion, and religion without a church". Finally, he decides that a humanistic civilization is not feasible. "For those who had not followed Mr. Babbitt very far, or who had felt his influence more remotely, the collapse would be back into humanitarianism thinly disguised. For others who had followed him hungrily to the end and had found no hay in the stable, the collapse might well be into a Catholicism *without* the element of humanism and criticism, which would be a Catholicism of despair."

After that, it is extremely interesting that the next participant in the symposium is Mr. Michael Williams, the editor of the *Commonweal* and therefore an avowed Catholic apologist. The rôles played by Papini in Italy, by Henri Massis and Jacques Maritain in France, and by Hilaire Belloc and G. K. Chesterton in England, all happen to be unfilled by American counterparts: there are some signs that Mr. Williams wishes to organize a Catholic intelligentsia among us. One hopes, for the sake of seeing greater variety in our intellectual life and for the sake of the richness that Catholic traditions still retain, that he will be successful. In his article, *The Catholic Spirit in American Literature* (*Forum,* September, 1928), Mr. Williams injects into our play more than a merely moderate special plea for the Catholic Church as the *fons et origo* of religious standards in the Western World. His contention is that American literature must follow the lead of certain neo-Catholic tendencies in European letters and return to religion. "This movement implies a return to the Catholic spirit; for it is in Catholicism, and only there, that one can find the authority for those standards and disciplines which Messrs. Babbitt and More justly say must be reëstablished if American literature is to be saved from decadence and chaos. That Puritanism must pass and is passing, despite its pale shadow of authentic Christian values, can hardly be doubted; and the barbarians and decadents—even the parlor intelligentsia, ineffective as they are—must be allowed some merit for accomplishing its overthrow."

This is a good curtain speech for Act Two. The drama has altered from a contrast between humanism and romanticism to a contrast between humanism and religion, and it was at this point I went to converse with my friend, Mr. Sweord.

III

Mr. Sweord is the kind of person I really like to meet—and scarcely ever find. This is saying, indirectly, that he is not at all the sort of person I am, and indeed I would not, if I had the power, transform myself into

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him. We are all of us so attached to ourselves, so fastened by *amour-propre,* that it is extremely hard, self-love being blind, to win any self-knowledge whatever. But we need to gain only a little to be dissatisfied with what we are and to come to realize that we ourselves are not the kind of persons we enjoy meeting. One's aim, however, is to improve and develop what has been given to one and not to exchange personalities with someone else. This perhaps indicates the relation I stand in with Mr. Adam Sweord.

It is remarkable that Mr. Sweord himself seems rather ordinary. There is nothing of the genius about him, no striking eccentricities or extravagances, no great natural powers flooding over in one direction or another. If he is unusual at all it is for a certain fine balance in his character.

I shall tell you a few things about him. He is a business man and makes a very good living. But his business does not ride him: as a matter of fact, he has changed it rather frequently: and he does not seem to care for wealth for its own sake. He gives away a good deal of his money, mostly to scholarly ventures, or he uses it up in protracted travels or in little excursions into activities of life which are not habitual to him . . . as when he gave up his affairs to work in a restaurant kitchen for six months or as when for a similar period of time he took instruction in the arts of acting and pantomime. "Freedom for personal experiment in life—that is what money gives me," he once said. "That, and a gauge of how hard I can work. For I have never been able to make money except by the silly method of earning it. Making more money than one naturally would earn requires an intense psychological effort. Any time I wish to I can measure my prowess for work by setting myself a substantial sum of money to be acquired in a short period of time."

So far as I can observe, the principle of Mr. Sweord's life is found in one of his favorite sayings: "Never do as others do". But I hesitate to say how revolutionary this principle proves to be when thoroughly inspected. Other people are always either conforming to customs or non-conforming to them, so ordinary non-conformity is ruled out for my friend. Besides, the respectable and the disrespectful are very much alike fundamentally. They are simply the reverse of each other—the hollow and the bump, so to speak, that are so often cited for their similarity. No, Mr. Sweord, who holds Swiftian views on the quality of mankind, aims to be a radical non-conformer in *every* phase of existence, to observe the conventions in a way other than that of the conventional, and to depart from the conventional in a manner different from that of the rebellious.

I can give only one illustration. For Mr. Sweord is wary of social suggestions, such as the widespread suggestion that man for his health's sake requires eight hours of sleep. Very possibly, he felt, this is an over-estimate or a concession to man's natural indolence. Since the waking state is much more interesting than the state of sleep, it would be desirable to have as much of it as possible. So he set to experimenting to learn what sleep he really required and after a little difficulty in combating his education in this regard, he found to his delight that he could do perfectly well on five hours of sleep.

Grappling for a succinct way of describing Mr. Sweord, I call him a man of initiative. Now if you should come to know him and should propose to dine at a certain restaurant, he would counter at once, not invariably however, with a proposal to go to another restaurant where, so he will say, he has long wished to take you. Similarly he is independent toward the ideas that are offered him. *He* does the suggesting, *he* adopts the positive tone, *he* speaks seemingly from his own personal authority. To some this is an irritating trait, most so when Mr. Sweord has ignored some suggestion they have made and then after an interval has suddenly advanced the identical suggestion as his own!

A many-sided man. One of his sides is very close to our interests here, for Mr. Sweord is a connoisseur of letters. I have seen some of his manuscripts: he writes extremely well, but scarcely ever for publication. And he is a trained and discriminating reader. With my strong professional bent, I have difficulty in comprehending his amateur spirit. But literary scholarship reminds me that there have been periods when a number of people were skilful in composition and

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subtly versed in reading who had no desire to make a career of these graces. They indulged themselves in *belles lettres* for the pleasure of it, very much, I suppose, as today a number of persons shine in the ballroom who feel no inclination to take up dancing as a profession. In this respect Mr. Sweord is a survivor of the age of Addison, a cultivated private practitioner of the arts of reading and writing whose main ambition lies elsewhere.

His main ambition is too weak a phrasing: it is really with him a passion for understanding the meaning and aim of his existence. He seeks a comprehensive object for his life and a means of encompassing it. Thus, when I spoke on my last meeting with him of the series of articles on humanism and religion in the *Forum* he brought up at once the topic of "ways of life". It seemed to me that he was more skeptical than the writers we have surveyed, and more practical, and just as concerned with the aspirations of man toward nobility as they. As nearly as I can, I shall now report what he said.

"Humanism is a clearly defined technic. Its law is measure, its process is mediation between extremes. It is a fact of racial experience and of individual experience that at one extreme we are overwhelmed by what in philosophical language we may call impressions of the Many and at the other extreme we are given momentary pause by occasional intuitions of the One. None of us can escape a strong sense of the diversity, the miscellaneity, the complex flow of existence: none of us can escape scattered flashes of a feeling of Unity in all this variegated and apparently unrelated flux, though we may disregard such monitions. Humanism prescribes mediation between Many-ness and One-ness, and likewise between tyranny and anarchy in politics, between romanticism and religion in literature, and so on in all the departments of life. It is—and for this we can be grateful—an attempt to formulate deliberately and reasonably a method of living.

"However, there are two assumptions connected with this technic that must be proved before humanism as a doctrine can fully commend itself. The first is that man can choose to practise this discipline, and the second is that it leads surely to the development, not of such mediocre qualities as decency, good sense, moderation, but to personal perfection. The first has been a challenged assumption in the past and it is being challenged today, strenuously, by the school of behavioristic psychologists. According to the determinists, it is purely accidental whether you are a humanist or not. Humanism as an ethical code is strong, but as a psychological technic it is weak. It requires a power of self-direction in man, but if this power is not actualized to begin with, how may it be acquired? Here is where the humanistic theorist must enter into practical psychology. Regarding the second assumption, that humanism conduces to perfection of character, the humanists are not entirely definite. They do not believe in an Absolute. They distinguish between their plane of life and the religious plane. Yet subtly they are continually introducing religious virtues into the goal they picture for their activity. But will a theory and a discipline, primarily based on the relations of man to man and actually suppressing the idea of a relation between man and God, conduct one to religious virtues? It seems not, to me. Rather I should expect the results to be only a compromise between divinity and brutishness to be the purely local and terrestrial virtues that would flow from such a compromise.

"Now consider the religious thinker. He sees in black and white. Men fall into two classes: they are either the servants of God, bounden to sweat for Him without knowing or feeling why, or they are the sons of God, coöperating in His universal designs. But there is no middle way such as the humanists proclaim. Religion is the study and pursuit of perfection, not moderation: it insists on a radical transformation of the devotee, not an amelioration of his present character. Here, in the elevation of its aim, in its clear intention to realize the divine in man, religion has the advantage of humanism.

"But where is the technic that corresponds to this exalted aim? How shall we go about acquiring an immortal soul, for the pure sources of the great religions do not tell us we have one? They say that we must labor to develop a soul. If there was such a method once for putting on immortality, it is not known today in modern religion. On the con-

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trary, materialistic psychologists can account for all the phenomena of our present day churches, and can say: you cannot wish your way into the Kingdom of Heaven, you cannot conquer it by hope, you cannot accidentally by grace steal your way in. Prayers and devotion and singing hymns will not do it, for we know all about such mechanisms. Ignorance is not the passport, and you are as ignorant as we. Unless you can produce a system of training for the purpose, we cannot believe in the realizability of your aims.

"So here in its lack of a detailed discipline, religion compares unfavorably with humanism, subject though the latter's method is to negative criticism. What is the skeptical person to do? The choice is offered between a defined way of life leading to uncertain and too modest results, and a splendid vision of right relations between creature and creator without a practical means of knowing them and becoming able to sustain them. The skeptic can take neither an enterprise that virtually declares itself hopeless of final knowledge nor the drug of vision. Man from his point of view is not just an animal, but even a crazed animal. He can only become sane by finding the way of sanity. Thus, the skeptic is driven into psychology and thus he comes to look for technics of sane living. He becomes a collector of ways of life and a critic of them as a preliminary to selecting the one that appears best fitted to realize the aim of self-perfection. It will be interesting and perhaps profitable if this is the new direction that modern skepticism is inclined to take."

"It sounds a little like Keyserling's School of Wisdom," I said with a smile meant to be disarming, for I knew Mr. Sweord's contempt for Keyserling's lucubrations.

"Basta!" he replied. "Go and purge thyself with Pavlov before thou dreamest of liberty."

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ALLEN'S CHRISTMAS TRILOGY AND ITS MEANING

By Grant C. Knight

PERHAPS better than any other novelist James Lane Allen represented the American esthetic during the late nineties and the beginning of the twentieth century. The adoration for Nature that had been inherited from the English romantic poets, the respect for Addisonian chastity of style strutting now and then in the warmer colors of Keats and Shelley, the imperious Duty of George Eliot softened sufficiently by the Sentiment of Dickens and Thackeray, the realism through which Thomas Hardy was making popular the pessimism of Arthur Schopenhauer (properly diluted for the readers of the McKinley Period), exciting undertones heard from the virtuosity of Zola, Flaubert, Balzac, Pierre Loti, the adornment of one's pages with apt allusions to classic literature and mythology—all these, sprayed with an aroma of languorous melancholy, are to be found in the work of this Kentucky novelist before 1909. He had his faults, to be sure, which were even then recognized: a so-called sectional inclination toward tearful passages and rhetorical paragraphs, an error now and then in his historical backgrounds. But on the whole his writings were exactly suited to the audience for which he composed: an audience rapidly attaining literary self-consciousness but not fully aware of its adolescent dependence upon European inspiration, an audience that was yet minded to believe in a nearly stainless hero who could kneel before a spotless heroine and ask with emotion for the honor of her hand in marriage.

It was pretty largely a feminine public, and Allen was, with the exception of an interval to be pointed out presently, a feminine writer. For many years they were well pleased with each other. Not that Allen courted his public. He was quite sincere in setting his sails to catch the zephyrs and in steering by the gleam of his Southern Cross. There is abundant testimony that he was as careless of opportunities to acquire wealth through hasty production as he was unwilling to attract notice to his person. The literary spokesman for a generation that looked to Hamilton Wright Mabie and Henry Van Dyke for critical leadership needed no advertising, although many years later he half-regretted his early contempt for publicity. In this fortunate time he was content to be called "the aristocrat of American letters".

This reputation came in spite of the fact, probably because of the fact, that Allen was not a real American novelist. He sensed, true enough, the "fling and swing" of the spirit of our country; he called, in an excellent essay, for the interpretation and representation of that spirit in fiction free from delicacies and carving of cherry-stones, but he could never overcome the fact that he had been born in 1849 and that his idyllic boyhood, his early religious faith, his life as teacher, and his abnormal sensitiveness unfitted him to picture the hurly-burly of our national scene. He never attempted great panoramas such as those of Frank Norris and Theodore Dreiser. He gave no indication of seeing what Robert Herrick and Upton Sinclair were discovering. He professed no admiration for the developing American fiction, and in 1915 he told a New York *Times* reporter that the six best novels in the language were *Vanity Fair, David Copperfield, The Heart of Midlothian, Adam Bede, Tess,* and *The Scarlet Letter.* And in spite of his asking in more than one essay and newspaper interview for a literature that would be at once local, national, and universal in its scope the shadow of a foreign influence is discernible today across practically everything he wrote.

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Mr. Allen was, as Professor Pattee has declared in his *American Literature Since 1870,* the most scholarly American novelist of his period; but, although he could read the output of France, Germany, Italy, and Spain in the original, the masterpieces of his racial forbears had most to do with modelling his style and dictating his choice of subject. It is impossible to read Allen's seventeen novels, his one book of travel, his critical essays and his poems without realizing that he knew the *Spectator Papers* and De Quincey, Wordsworth and Keats and Shelley, Scott and George Eliot, Thackeray and Dickens and Hardy.

This classical Anglian strain prepared the way for his acceptance and popularity in England,—not easy things for an American to obtain in the nineties. As early as 1884 Edmund Gosse had come upon Allen's *Always Bussing His Friends* and had taken it straightway to Austin Dobson; the two friends had read the tribute to Steele together, and Gosse had written young Joseph B. Gilder that the *Critic* would be wise to retain the pseudonymous author on its list of contributors. *A Kentucky Cardinal* (1894) was the first of Allen's books to be published in England, and its success was such as to gain a hearing for anything he wrote later. It was, however, *The Choir Invisible* that gave Allen his international reputation and that is today all too uncritically the one title most commonly associated with his name. The book had a tremendous vogue: copy after copy fell from the presses until 250,000 had been sold in its first year—a formidable figure for those days—and the enthusiasm of the reviewers had been matched by the generosity of the public. So in 1897 Allen had the satisfaction of knowing that both his reputation and his income were high.

His next two books were also best sellers, competing with *Red Pottage, Alice of Old Vincennes, To Have and To Hold,* and *Janice Meredith. The Reign of Law,* which as *The Increasing Purpose* disturbed few Englishmen, stirred up in this country a bitter controversy between Fundamentalists and anti-Fundamentalists, and thereby caused part of Allen's following to feel for the first time some doubt as to his value. These were pretty successfully allayed by the publication of *The Mettle of the Pasture,* a novel with a moral about as orthodox as a moral can be.

In 1903 Allen had every reason to feel confident of his place in the history of our literature. He had written four best sellers, two of which are likely to persist as American classics; he had been acclaimed in England; *The Choir Invisible* had been translated into French and *A Kentucky Cardinal* into Japanese; he was termed the foremost living American novelist; his royalties permitted him to live in the style desirable to a Kentucky gentleman; thousands were ready to purchase whatever he might write. Up to this time only one of his stories had caused the eminently respectable to feel uneasy. It is true that several reviewers had qualms over *The Choir Invisible* because it related the love of a man for another's wife and so extended a dangerous influence over young readers—a conclusion absurd enough to those who today may find fault only with the rapturous idealism of the book; true also that many Catholics had not forgotten two novelettes in *Flute and Violin* and that militant Protestants had not forgiven the defense of evolution in *The Reign of Law.* But after all, these stories were almost harmless when compared with *Butterflies,* a serial which ran in the *Cosmopolitan* (it was too strong for *Harpers'*) from December, 1895, to March, 1896, and which later was issued in book form, with important changes, as *A Summer in Arcady.* With this work Allen began what he thought of as his masculine period. They who have been misled into believing him a writer only of "affectionate and idealized portrayals" should turn to this magazine story for an account of seduction as frank as anything in our literature before the twentieth century and for symbolism more daring than any other I know prior to *Jurgen.* Fortunately for Mr. Allen, the book largely corrected the impression the original narrative had made and the majority of people with opinions about authors still regarded him as the champion *par excellence* of nobility in letters.

And then at the very height of his popularity he fell strangely silent for six years. With every chance to capitalize his name,

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with editors and publishers clamoring for manuscripts, with Reginald Wright Kauffman reminding him that " 'Tis a long Lane that has no turning, James", he kept his counsel about his plans and, except for some magazine writing, offered nothing during a period when David Graham Phillips turned out nine works, Robert Chambers eight, and Jack London twelve. When asked about a forthcoming volume his reply was invariably: "There will be a book when it is ready". Very slowly and very patiently and quite unaware of the tempest that was to rage about his head he was building what he meant to be his masterpiece, a Christmas trilogy which should present something original in the way of Yuletide literature and which should by its insight into one of the universal human tragedies answer for all time the charge that he saw life too kindly to see it well.

The first of the projected three volumes was *The Bride of the Mistletoe,* and its date of publication, 1909, marks the beginning in that decline in his popularity which, with but a brief interruption, has continued until the present. Anyone familiar with *The Bride of the Mistletoe* knows that it is a mistake to think that this decline was owing entirely to a change of taste on the part of the reading public, to the strenuousness of a feminism that rejected Allen's gospel of womanhood, to the turmoil of the war, to the growing impatience with what is called Allen's sentimentality. It began, not with a tale too sweet and sickly for a healthy palate, but with one too stark and searching for the multitude of adherents to the Victorian compromise, one that, THE BOOKMAN warned, was not to be recommended to the *jeune fille.* A tale which puzzled and shocked its readers even more than their reactions puzzled and hurt its author.

Allen gallantly continued the trilogy with *The Doctor's Christmas Eve,* but by that time many of his admirers, willing to believe that he had bargained his ideals for pieces of silver, were prepared to give the new venture a reception less than cordial. This second volume was reviewed with a curtness that could have seemed to Allen nothing but brutal; and discouraged not so much by reduced royalties as by the feeling that he had unwittingly betrayed those who trusted in him, he abandoned his scheme and the third volume remained unwritten. Uncertain whether to go on with a milder realism or to return to his earlier feminine manner, he compromised and showed his hesitation clearly by publishing *The Heroine in Bronze.* In 1914 he contributed to *The Century* the first book of a trilogy dealing with mothers and sons. It likewise remains incomplete, but that is another story.

Since 1910, therefore, the question that has remained uppermost in the minds of those who try to explain James Lane Allen's career has been: What did he try to say in *The Bride of the Mistletoe,* that strange, chilling, rhapsodic "story"; and what did he try to say in its lighter, warmer, but equally strange sequel, with its hero who wanted to express his sex-frustration by giving one roar like that of a beast of the jungle—an incident pointed at with fine scorn by the high-minded? Had the gentleman from Kentucky lost the chivalric reticences of the days when he created John Gray and Adam Moss? What was the theme of the trilogy, anyway? On the title-page of *The Doctor's Christmas Eve* he had placed a quotation from Francis of Assisi: *Secretum meum mihi*—apt words and true. *The Bride of the Mistletoe* had been dedicated to "one who knows"—"too much", added one offended moralist. But what was to be known? The secret was his, and has remained one of the mysteries of contemporary American literature. It is now possible, however, with the aid of clues Allen left among his papers, to resolve the mystery of the truncated trilogy and at the same time teach a salutary lesson to hasty newspaper reviewers. Let us look first at their essays in interpretation.

The Bride of the Mistletoe sold well at the outset; Allen's name carried it into successful rivalry with *Katrine, Mr. Opp, The White Mice* and *The White Sister,* the other best-sellers for 1909. Signs of revolt were soon visible. Thousands of Allen's followers believed after reading the book that he had violated their confidence; other thousands, not having read, were alarmed by what their friends and the papers had to report. After conning over a hundred columns one sees that

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the reviewers, both here and abroad, line up in four ranks: those who played safe by commending the "exquisite style" of the book; those who claimed that it was a genuine and unique performance; those who confessed bewilderment but were willing to await with open mind the subsequent volume (they were in a majority); and those who recoiled from the crisis which confronted the middle-aged husband and wife in the forty-hour duration of the plot.

Critics who made a conscientious effort to understand *The Bride of the Mistletoe* declared owlishly that it derived something from what William Winter had shuddered over five years before as "the slimy muck of Mr. Ibsen and the lunacy of Mr. Maeterlinck". This was obvious enough; both dramatists were receiving considerable space in the public prints and Allen was not unacquainted with the character of their achievements. Nora's much-mentioned slamming of the door of her doll's house echoes—but very, very gently—through the Kentucky mansion of the woman who had convinced herself that she was but an Incident to her husband, and the "half-sublime, half-silly" dialogue of the Belgian's plays whispers through the tense conversations between the professor and his wife. Also, in *The Doctor's Christmas Eve* the preternaturally wise children seem to have kinship with Eylof and Yniold. These critics were likewise correct in believing that Allen had leaned heavily upon *The Golden Bough* for the relation between love and the mistletoe and in guessing that he had read McKnight and Campbell on phallic worship. Further than this they could not go and the meaning of the story remained hidden.

But it was the last type of critic who did the most serious damage. Few terms of abuse were spared. "As a piece of writing," said *The Chicago Evening Post,* "it is bastard, with its queer mixture of anthropology, portraiture, and rhapsody." The New York *Times* deplored "its poisonous purpose". The Boston *Transcript* protested that "it is not poetry nor is it sensible prose. It is merely an unending series of words, words, words". The Philadelphia *Press* avowed: "It is a miserable, sordid, repulsive subject—Faugh!" "Sensual and disgusting," cried the Springfield *Republican.* *The Congregationalist* asserted that "the book reminds one of the performances of a man half drunk". *The Nation,* henceforth to set its face sternly against Mr. Allen, attacked his "sentimental voluptuousness", his "gauze-veiled eroticism", and complained: "When are we to have done with this harping upon the physiology of marriage?" To their credit, it must be stated that British publications showed much more tolerance and sympathy, especially the influential *Athenæum* and *Academy,* which last proclaimed the book "a fine contribution to English literature".

The consequence of all this vilification was that *The Doctor's Christmas Eve* was looked at askance by those who found Allen's lavender-and-lace reputation soiled. It received fewer, shorter, and cooler press notices—a surprising phenomenon for a once popular author. Nor did the comparative tameness of this narrative placate the hostile critics. The New York *Post* dubbed Allen's imagination "decadently Gallic"; the New York *Times* commented upon his "abysmal lack of sense of humor" (there's criticism for you!); *The Nation* felt that there was "something mawkish and morbid in the processes of a mind perpetually preoccupied with the 'mystery' of the sex relation. We seem to be eavesdropping at a private confessional or sharing the dreams of an anchorite". Unkindest cut of all, a paper of Allen's home town, the Lexington *Herald,* rejected the story as "common and stupid", denied the truth of its picture of Kentucky life, and spoke sadly of the "dirt and dust" that was "ruining" the writer's mind. Discouraged by the misunderstanding, conscious that much of it was caused by his timidity in handling matters of sex, facing defeat for the first time, Allen gave no later hint of how he would have rounded out the trilogy.

However, in an envelope containing papers connected with the *Bride of the Mistletoe* he left material which shows clearly how his mind was working during the years of preparation for his task. He was reading about birds and trees, joining the Zoölogical Society, investigating Christmas customs and allied pagan rites, keeping a journal which reveals a lonely, brooding person much like

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Hawthorne. He preserved a clipping entitled "Why We Hang Up Our Stockings" and another dealing with the Star of Bethlehem; he cut from a paper a reprint of Richard Burton's poem "Those Who Walk Alone", which, I believe, helped him construct the character of his heroine. Still more important is a clipped paragraph entitled "Old Stories of Christmas"; it must be reproduced verbatim:

"There is a legend in Germany that when Eve plucked the fatal apple the leaves of the tree immediately shrivelled into needle points and its bright green turned dark. The nature of the tree changed and it became an evergreen, in all seasons preaching the story of man's fall through that first act of disobedience. Only on Christmas does it bloom brightly with lights and become beautiful with love gifts. The curse is turned into a blessing by the coming of the Christ child, and thus we have our Christmas tree."

This sheds considerable light upon Allen's plan, but two other items must be examined before the illumination becomes complete. Both of them are unmistakably in Allen's hand. One, pencilled on the back of a bill presented to him at the Hotel Frascati, Havre, presents this outline:

THE DAY WE EARN

A Three-Part Story

II The Bride of the Mistletoe
—— the Woman
note of the mortal

II II A Brood of the Eagle
—— The Children
note of the immortal

II II II The Pledge of the Evergreen
—— The Man
Mortal and immortal

Notes—The day we all earn—we have earned ours together

The other outline presents a similar synopsis, with slight, unimportant variation in a few words but with the addition: "This his last note—all peace, all goodness something we earn".

Combining these bits of evidence we have fairly good proof of Allen's objective. *The Bride of the Mistletoe* was to show, through a wife's realization that she was not all in all to her husband, the sense of change, the turning of green into dark. The rejection of her person is associated poetically with the Christmas festival and those ancient ceremonies which symbolized the urge of sex, and the several strands are most deftly woven together into the "note of the mortal". Through *The Doctor's Christmas Eve* runs the idea of a child's turning a curse into a blessing, the concept of a Christ-child, and it is this idea, not Allen's sentimentality, that requires the death of the doctor's son. Not a word of the third book has been found. But it seems quite likely—a mere hypothesis, this—that this volume, which was not to be fiction, would have been an essay or notes composed by Doctor Birney and given to his wife to read, possibly on the Christmas Eve following the boy's death. These notes might have combined mystically the German legend and their own experience; certainly it is probable that they would have ended with a text to the effect that if they had at last through tragic misunderstandings arrived at a day of trust and content it was because they had together earned that goodness and that peace. Happiness, in other words, cannot be given or found; it must be earned.

It is, therefore, fine irony that an attempted trilogy with a theme so platitudinous as to seem only commonplace should have aroused for its author so much suspicion and condemnation. Far from being the half-drunken sensualist or drug addict that some imagined, he was almost apostolic in his moral energy. Had the readers of 1909 and 1910 possessed Allen's patience, had they been as devoted as he to the hope of expressing this ordinary idea in a symphonic style that would be something new in English literature, had they, perhaps, been given an inkling of his real purpose and so had the opportunity to discover all the rich implications of these Christmas stories, then they must in all justice have given them a truer rating. Surely they form even in torso a unique achievement, and we have not too many of those. It may be even that the unfinished trilogy will some day be spoken of as our finest symbolic writing.

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HOW I MADE A CRIME WAVE

By Lincoln Steffens

EVERY now and then there occurs the phenomenon called a crime wave. New York has such waves periodically; other cities have them; and they sweep over the public and nearly drown the lawyers, judges, preachers and other leading citizens who feel that they must explain and cure these extraordinary outbreaks of lawlessness. Their diagnoses and their remedies are always the same: the disease is lawlessness; the cure is more law, more arrests, swifter trials and harsher penalties. The sociologists and other scientists go deeper into the wave; the trouble with them is they do not come up. I enjoy crime waves.

I made one once; I was a reporter on the *New York Evening Post*. Jacob A. Riis helped; he was a reporter on the *Evening Sun*. Many other reporters joined in the uplift of that rising tide of crime, but it was my creation, that wave, and Theodore Roosevelt stopped it. He was the President of the Police Board. But even he had to get Riis and me to stop the wave. I feel, therefore, that I know something the wise men do not know about crime waves, and so get a certain sense of happy superiority out of reading editorials, sermons, speeches and learned theses on my specialty. It was this way:

The basement of the old police headquarters was a cool place in summer, and detectives, prisoners and we reporters used to sit together down there and gossip or doze or play cards. Good stories of the underworld were told; better than are ever printed as news.. They were true stories, and true detective stories are more fascinating than the fiction even of the masters. Sometimes a prisoner would give his version of his crime and his capture after the detective who had caught him told his. Sometimes the stories were dull, technical, so to speak, and therefore interesting enough to the participants; like ex-soldiers comparing notes of a battle after the war.

One day I was dozing away, bored by a long dispute as to whether it had happened on a Thursday or a Friday night, when a fresh voice broke into the debate. The speaker was evidently bored too.

"Ah, say, cut that," he said. "I'll tell you a good one on two cops up on Murray Hill. They were talking at the corner of Fortieth Street and Madison, when a wagon drove up to a house, a swell residence closed for the summer. The family was away and a care-taker was in charge. The care-taker was Billy Bones, that Chicago house-buster who has no business to be in New York anyhow, and the driver of the wagon was our own well-known sneak, Mr. Busy-bee. They had planned a clean-out of that house; Billy had got the job for that super-purpose, not to take care of the house, but, as I say, to clean it. It was dusk, the hour they had agreed upon for the job, and they were a bit troubled at the sight of the cops on the corner. Busy-bee pointed 'em out when Billy Bones answered his ring and came to the door. Billy felt of his face to feel if his chin was clean-shaved equal on both sides; it was, so he says:

" 'Oh, well, they're not Chicago bulls; they're only New York steers. If they come up, we'll ask 'em to help us. See?'

"The Bee has no local pride, no loyalty. The traitor says, 'All right, Billy. We'll try it; I don't want to hire the wagon twice for nothin'. Let's get some heavy things down on the sidewalk so as to give them something to do'. They did that. They brought out more and some bigger things than they ought to have taken. Just for ducks. The sidewalk was a mess, when the cops parted at the corner and one of 'em comes down to see who was cluttering up his beat so that honest citizens could hardly pass. He came up to the Bee, who was sweating more than he would have if he wasn't scared.

" 'Why don't you get some of those things

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into the wagon,' the cop ast him, 'instead of cluttering up th' right o' way this a-way?'

"Because the Bee had to swallow before he could speak Bones comes down the steps with a trunk and explains that, as th' care-taker, he wants to get the things out and close the house as soon as possible; that they meant to load up afterwards, but everything was out now, and if the cop would lend 'em a hand, they'd clean the sidewalk in two shakes. The cop didn't like the work.

"What did he join the force for? he asked Bones, and Bones didn't answer that. 'Couldn't of,' he told me. 'I couldn't no more of explained that than I could of told why the force joined th' cop.' All he says was, 'Ah, come on, be a sport an' give me a boost with this trunk'. The cop boosted that trunk; he boosted other trunks; he put the parlor clock in himself. Say, that cop did more of that crime than the Bee did. The Bee apologized afterwards to Bones for layin' off. He wasn't malingerin', he said. He simply wasn't used to workin' on house-cleanin' with policemen. And Bones adds to me—to me, mind you (a plain-clothes detective-sergeant),—Bones adds as a postscript to the Bee's reflection on policemen: 'He means policemen in uniform'.

"Well, anyway, that burglary was done with police aid and protection. When the wagon was loaded, Bones got his coat, locked the front door inside, came out by the service entrance with his coat and hat on and, thanking the cop, got up on the seat with Busy-Bee, the driver, and drove off with a selected load of pictures, furniture, clothes and odds and ends, which amounted, the owner says, to about ten thousand dollars! Why, Bones and the Bee alone got eight hundred for it from Barney Levy, the fence."

There was some laughter, a little comment, and the conversation passed on to idle gossip again. Pretending to wake up, I stretched, rose and idly walked out. In my office across the street, I wrote a news story of that robbery, but only because the victim was the well-known family of a popular Wall Street broker. I could not give away the source of my information; it might exclude me from the basement. I did not repeat the joke on the cop who helped the thieves. Since only *The Post* had it, however, the morning newspapers printed the "beat" and Riis was asked by his editor the next day why he did not have it. In the course of his irritated reply he said that he could get all he wanted of that sort of stuff and his editor answered:

"All right, get it, then."

That afternoon Riis reported a burglary which I knew nothing about, and it was my turn to be called down. My editor wanted to know why I was beaten.

"I thought you didn't want crimes in *The Post*."

"No, but a big burglary like that——"

All right; I called on my assistant, Robert, and told him we must get some crimes. We spent the day button-holing detectives; I sat an hour asleep in the basement in vain. Nothing but old stories. Robert saved the day. He learned and I wrote of the robbery of a Fifth Avenue Club. That was a beat on Riis, but Riis had two robberies that were beats on me. By that time the other evening papers were having some thefts of their own. The poker club reporters were loafers only by choice. They could get the news when they had to, and, being awakened by the scrap between Riis and me, they broke up their game and went to work, a combine. They were soon beating me, as Riis was. I was sorry I had started it. Robert or I had to sleep in turns in the basement, and we picked up some crimes, but Riis had two or three a day and the combine had at least one a day. The morning newspapers not only re-wrote ours, they had crimes of their own, which they grouped to show that there was a crime wave.

It was indeed one of the worst crime waves I ever witnessed, and the explanations were embarrassing to the Reform Police Board which my paper and my friends were supporting in their difficult reform work. The opposition papers, Tammany and the unreformed police officers, rejoiced in the outbreak of crime, which showed that the reformed police, and especially the new detective service, could not deal with criminals in a city like New York. This criticism had a point, which pricked the conscience even of Roosevelt himself. He had got rid of Superintendent Burns, the most famous of New

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York's detectives, removed Burns's self-trained Inspector and put in a Captain who would have no dealings with professional criminals. The old system was built upon the understood relations of the crooks and the detective-bureau. Certain selected criminals in each class—pickpockets, sneak thieves, burglars, etc.—were allowed to operate, within reason; the field was divided among them, by groups, each of which had a monopoly. In return for the paid-for privilege, the groups were to defend their monopoly from outsiders and report the arrival in town of strangers from other cities; and, upon demand, furnish information (not evidence) to the detectives and return stolen goods. This was called regulation and control. It worked pretty well and to the glory of the police, who could perform "miracles of efficiency" when the victim of a robbery was worth serving, but, of course, it did not stop stealing; it protected only citizens with pull, power or privilege. There were many crimes done within and without the system which depended, for public sufferance, upon the suppression of the news, as any detective system does. But Burns had taught New Yorkers to report their losses to the police, never to the press.

"If you tell us your troubles, we have a chance to detect the criminal," he said over and over again. "If you tell your friends or the press, the thieves are warned, and run away, and we can do nothing."

If citizens would reverse this method and report both to the press and the police they would learn something; they would soon find out how many crimes are committed in a day, how few are "detected", and force the police to detect many more. And, as for warning the criminals, these wise men know that the police always are told of a crime and that detectives work hardest on a case that is in the papers.

Roosevelt's chief of detectives was appointed because he hated the old system, held it to be useless and declared that he had a better way of dealing with the crooks. He asked leave to run the old crooks out of town; to watch for and arrest at the railroad stations new and known arrivals and to drive them away by threats of holding them as vagrants or fugitives from justice until he could obtain evidence against them from the cities where they had been working. This method was succeeding so well that Commissioner Parker, who was watching it, was satisfied with the progress made, and T. R. believed all was well till the crime wave rose and frightened him. He suspected Parker anyhow; the detective chief was Parker's choice, and the outbreak of crimes all over the city so alarmed T. R. that he was almost persuaded that the opposition was right in its criticism: that the police reformers, technically knowing nothing of crime, criminals and police work, had blundered in changing the system, the good old Burns method of handling this, the real business of the police: not to interfere with business and sport, but to catch and punish house-breakers and other law-breakers. He called a secret meeting of the Police Board and was making one of his picturesque harangues, when Commissioner Parker interrupted him.

"Mr. President, you can stop this crime wave whenever you want to."

"I! How?"

"Call off your friends Riis and Steffens. They started it and—they're sick of it. They'll be glad to quit if you'll ask them to."

Roosevelt was perplexed, as Parker meant him to be.

"I don't understand," he said.

Parker, who was "wise" and liked to mystify, explained that when the crime wave was running high he inquired into it, not as the editorial writers did, and the jurists and the scientists; he asked for the police records of crimes and arrests. These showed no increase at all; on the contrary, the totals of crimes showed a diminution and the arrests an increase. It was only the newspaper reports of crimes that had increased; there was a wave of publicity only. He turned therefore to the newspaper boys and asked them about it; "not your friends Riis and Steffens", he said, "but the regular fellows; the poker combine. They explained it. They said that the morning newspapers got their crimes from the courts where only arrested prisoners are tried or held for trial; and that their own, the evening papers got their stories by hard detective work, which they

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hate to have to do. But they must continue as long as your friends, Mr. President, keep up their fight. They started it; the other reporters didn't know where we got 'our dope from', they thought we had inside office detectives squealing."

T. R. adjourned the meeting, sent for Riis and me—and *bang*: "What's this I hear? You two and this crime wave? Getting us into trouble? You? I'd never have believed it. You?" Up and down his room he strode. Betrayed, he was, and by us whom he had trusted! Who, then, could be trusted? And for what? Why had we done it? Why?

"And you laugh!" he blazed at me. I couldn't help smiling. But Riis was serious, he saved us. He was contrite; he looked ashamed, and T. R. saw it.

"You, Jake," he said, "you tell me about it."

Riis told him about it: how I got him called down by printing a beat, and he had to get even. And did. "I beat the pot out of you," he boasted to me, his pride reviving. "And I can go right on doing it. I can get not one or two crimes a day; if I must I can get half-a-dozen, a dozen. I can get all there are every day.

"But," he turned to T. R., "I don't want to. So I'll tell you where my leak is and you can close it up. I have had it for years; seldom used it, but—you can stop it for ever."

And Riis, the honest, told us how the reports of all crimes of high degree against property were sent in by the precincts to the heads of inspection districts and then were all compiled in a completed list which was filed in a certain pigeon-hole in the outer office of the chief inspector. Not he, Riis, but his boy, Max, had observed the making and filing of this list one day, long ago; he had reported it to Riis, who resisted temptation to some extent.

"I told Max never to pry into that pigeon-hole—except in emergencies. And we never did, except in emergencies. But when you," he blazed at me, "when you got so smart, I got so mad that I told Max to go to it, and well,"—he turned back—"Mr. President, that file is in the extreme left of the third row of pigeon-holes from the bottom. It should be kept in the inside office."

"And you," T. R. whirled upon me.

I had to tell him about my naps in the basement among the gossiping detectives. I said I did not want to give up hearing the gossip, and T. R. and Riis agreed to grant me leave to go there on condition that I would use it only to collect local color for fiction, or data for the scientific purposes of my studies in sociology and ethics.

Thus the crime wave was ended to the satisfaction of all. T. R. took pleasure in telling Parker that he had deleted not only the wave, but the source of the wave, which was in Parker's department. He would not say what it was; sufficed that it was closed forever. Parker had to resolve that mystery by learning from the chief of detectives that the President had ordered the daily crime file removed from the public to his inner office—forever. Both commissioners, separately, promised that the wave would soon recede; and it did.

When Riis and I ceased reporting our robberies, the poker combine resumed their game and the morning newspapers discovered that the fickle public were "sick of crime" and wanted something else. The monthly magazines and the scientific quarterlies had some belated, heavy, incorrect analyses of the periodicity of lawlessness; they had no war to account for it, but it didn't matter. Then, for a while, the criminals could work o' nights, honest citizens could sleep, and judges could afford to be more just—for a while.

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CHARLES DICKENS, HOUSEHOLD WORD

By John Macy

IN 1836 there appeared the first part of a series of sketches by a parliamentary reporter twenty-four years old, and that first part contained a parody of a speech in Parliament. Before the year was out the British public knew that something fresh and hilarious had happened in current literature, that a new extraordinary talent had dawned. So Pickwick was born, and the reputation of the most popular English novelist was established at the very start. There had been an earlier start in some slight and amateurish *Sketches by Boz,* the cleverness of which had led the publishers to suggest what finally developed into *The Posthumous Papers of the Pickwick Club.*

Some writers discover their genius promptly, announce it in their first utterances with little juvenile groping, and continue to the end on the note which their youth has sounded. The Kipling of *Plain Tales from the Hills,* published when he was twenty-two, is the authentic Kipling. Through a long life of copious song and voluminous drama, Swinburne is always the poet of *Atalanta* and the first *Poems and Ballads.* Dickens grew from youth to a somewhat disillusioned maturity (*Our Mutual Friend*), but he remains almost always the Dickens of *Pickwick;* there and in the still earlier sketches we find suggestions of his leading ideas, interests, method (or lack of it), style and tone. And it may be that both in power and in limitation he remained Pickwick because he never lost his youth. Except in the deliberately sombre tragedies and tragicomedies, he is an eternal playboy, as in some sense an artist must always be. Moreover in *Pickwick* and the *Sketches* the graver note is struck more than once. In a very serious preface to a later edition of *Pickwick* he notes the social changes that have come over England since the original edition and hopes for reforms still unrealized: "that it may be discovered . . . that the universal diffusion of common means of decency and health is as much the right of the poorest of the poor, as it is indispensable to the safety of the rich, and of the state; that a few petty boards and bodies—less than drops in the great ocean of humanity that roars around them—are not for ever to let loose Fever and Consumption on God's creatures at their will, or always to keep their jobbing little fiddles going, for a Dance of Death". Except that Bernard Shaw believes there should not be any poor or rich, these sentences, written early in the nineteenth century, might appear almost unaltered in Shaw's very modern *Intelligent Woman's Guide to Socialism and Capitalism.* So we turn the page of Dickens from "a Dance of Death" to—the first jolly chapter of *Pickwick.*

This is perfectly, consistently Dickens. He blended, or sometimes simply mixed or alternated without very skilful blending, hearty laughter, high spirits, ridicule, pathos —sometimes too sentimental—and a moral indignation and hatred of cant worthy of Carlyle and winning the approval of Ruskin. *Pickwick* sets out in a spirit of fun and on the whole sustains that spirit to the end. But the scenes in Fleet Prison are not funny; they are the first of many scenes in many novels in which disgusting institutions are exposed. And the shysters, Dodson and Fogg, are the first of a long line of crooks, scoundrels, swindlers, villains, whom Dickens lashed to the great entertainment and edification of his readers. In this book, however, the laugh prevails, and the comic hero of it is not Mr. Pickwick, who becomes the personification of benevolence and naïve innocence, but Mr. Weller, who takes his place at once and securely with the laughable characters from Sancho Panza down through the humorous literature of the centuries. In this book Dickens shows his unrivalled instinct for proper names. The Dickens Dictionary

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contains no name more grotesque and queer-sounding than many you will actually find in your Telephone Directory (Snodgrass appears in mine). But either he contrived new combinations of letters or by inevitable association so identified existing family names with his people that each of his characters is recognized uniquely the minute the word is spoken, as exclusively as Hamlet or Macbeth or Falstaff. And this is true not only of the comic characters but of the serious heroes, Copperfield and Chuzzlewit. In *Pickwick* is first manifested Dickens's power to lift realistic reality to a plane of unreality and then to give to that unreality a new reality of its own. In comedy this transmogrification results in low farce at its worst, and at its best in a laughter merry, vivacious and droll. In tragedy it is, as Ruskin said, writing in a circle of fire.

Pickwick took the town by storm. Everybody talked about it and kept on talking about it for years: this brilliant thing did not flash out in an hour, but endured. There were Pickwick cigars and Pickwick everything else—just as Washington Irving lived to see Knickerbocker Ice and Knickerbocker Bread. And immediately arose that long tedious sluggish stream of puzzled academic criticism which began with the *Quarterly Review* and has not quite run out even in the fine article by Thomas Secombe in the *Encyclopædia Britannica*. For Mr. Secombe, after saying that the creations of Dickens live like those of Homer, Virgil, Chaucer, Rabelais, Cervantes, Shakespeare, Bunyan, Molière, Scott, then pronounces the judgment that the books of Dickens are "too vast, too chaotic and too unequal ever to become classics". Which either means exactly nothing or is not true, since they are already classics if the word has any sense at all. I always enjoy hugely the discomfiture of critics of Dickens, and I recall with a kind of sad amusement the way out taken by an exquisite Harvard professor of English, who rather fancied himself as a disciple of Pater. He gave a course supposed to cover English literature from the death of Scott to the death of Browning (why do courses in literature have mortuary terminals?) and he devoted lectures to Carlyle, Thackeray, Browning, and the rest; but he did not mention Dickens!—the supreme myth-maker and humorist who not only conquered the imagination of England and America but was naturalized in France as heartily as we have adopted Dumas, and had a greater influence than any other English writer of the nineteenth century in Russia. The faults of Dickens should be sharply and vigorously noted, and he had as many faults as even his gigantic strength could carry. But after these faults are noted and acknowledged, Dickens remains or, rather, keeps on going, and formal criticism can throw up its hands and take a vacation.

The secret of Dickens is quite simple. Most of the writers of the nineteenth century were in sympathy with the Common People, that vague aggregate which includes everybody from the poorest up to what are called the lower middle classes. But many of these writers did not know the people. Ruskin and Morris who fought the battles of the working classes, had no first-hand knowledge of dockhands and miners and the inhabitants of the slums. Carlyle knew the peasant poor but outgrew if he did not quite forget them. George Eliot had more than an inkling, but remained the sympathetic, philosophic observer. So far as the workers were concerned Thackeray might as well have been a Chinese mandarin. Dickens not only knew, observed, studied the Common People; he *was* the Common People. He was by derivation, experience, sympathy, instinct; and he continued to be the voice and exponent of ordinary humanity (often in extraordinary and fantastic situations) even after he became a howling swell and hobnobbed with members of the Best Society—with whom, however, he did not waste very much time. Fortunately he never went to Oxford or Cambridge. There were plenty of English writers who did go to the universities, plenty to preserve the fine flavor of tradition; a formal education would have ruined Dickens, if he had taken it seriously. Even when he was acknowledged and welcomed by the great, the noble, and the learned, he did not quite like them as a class, and they as a class are the least fairly, least generously, least intelligently treated when they appear

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in his novels. It has been said that he could not draw a gentleman, which is as absurd as to say that he could not describe a sunset. He could if he had wanted to, but he did not want to; that was not the kind of human being in whom he was most interested. But many gentlemen admired him. It must not be supposed that only the vulgar read and worshipped him. Everybody read him, including the Queen (who was a bit of a vulgarian herself and later liked Marie Corelli!). Other men of letters appreciated his greatness: Thackeray, Carlyle, Ruskin, of course; and Swinburne, an aristocrat in blood and mind, poured cascades of roses upon his head, as Swinburne was accustomed to do upon any writer he adored. Official scholarship has treated Dickens with increasing respect; one of the first professors to understand him was the learned A. W. Ward, who twelve years after the death of Dickens, wrote the excellent life in *English Men of Letters;* the most rapturous Dickensian could not ask for anything better.

Dickens had no formal education, and was on the whole the better for it. But he had a genuine education, a sound discipline. I do not mean the School of Life, which we all attend and from which most of us learn all too little. Dickens gave himself a real literary education. As a boy he read Fielding, Smollett, Defoe, Goldsmith, *Don Quixote, Gil Blas,* which so captured his imagination that he relived the life of the characters, and surely a novelist could have no better preparation than that. For an English story-teller one reading of *Tom Jones* is better than twenty years' reading of Greek and Latin. And I think that literary critics who have never been through the mill may forget what a good practical training, up to a certain point, is work as a reporter.

In addition to the routine task of taking down the speeches and debates in Parliament —which may not have had a good effect on his style—he had a miscellaneous experience in police courts and other real and vital scenes. So that he learned how people talk, and is probably the most accurate recorder of the language of the streets before the modern conscious realists; his short-hand probably gave him his acute phonetic sense. He also patiently developed his own style, idiomatic, colloquial, vigorous. There is much hasty and slovenly writing in Dickens, and later there is sometimes a quasi-literary ornateness, alien to his fundamental sincerity. But there is almost no page, no sentence, which is not expressive; his words almost always say something, the run of his sentences is rapid and unflaggingly progressive, even when they are redundant and prolix. And that is why, quite simply, anybody can read him and millions of readers tolerate and follow him to a length which in another writer they would find mere longwindedness. He may lead you a pretty long chase, even into somewhat thick tangles of plot, but he does not lose you; his tireless animation, his prodigious energy pulls you after him. And allowing for all his faults, most of his writing is downright good, English prose such as we should be proud to write if we could. He was not a careless workman; on the contrary he was very careful, conscientious and laborious, but he sometimes raced ahead at top speed through stretches of excitement lasting for many days; his taste was not always certain; and his self-criticism, though honest and exacting, was not so fine and keen as his other faculties. Perhaps we may be glad of that, for self-criticism is a kind of inhibition that checks the confident run of thought, and if Dickens had lost his superb confidence in himself he would have been lost. If he did not revise and rewrite thoroughly but seemed to trust to improvisation, the reason is that he was always moving forward to the next book which was shaping in his mind before the one in hand was finished.

Mr. Secombe says that "Dickens had no artistic ideals worth speaking about". And that again means nothing or is not true. He had many and high artistic ideals much worth speaking about, his own ideals. He was a great editor, and his letters and reported conversations contain many suggestions about technique, usually of a practical kind. (His abundant letters are among the best in our language.) I gather from some criticisms that the critics think he wrote blindly, by main strength and unconscious instinct, which is as foolish as a notion often met with in America that Lincoln just happened to

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write well and the Gettysburg Address was composed for him by God Almighty. (Compare the equally uncritical but rather suggestive idea that God sometimes took the pen out of Wordsworth's hand.) Dickens knew exactly what he was about. He was a natural actor, but he was also a trained actor and stage-manager, calculating his effects deliberately if not always nicely. He was as unremitting in his self-discipline as Trollope, and he took himself and his art with high seriousness. In point of industry and application to his task he is a model for young writers, and when his style is most sinewy and simple, that too is a model. But woe to anyone who should try to imitate his peculiar twists, crotchets, whimsicalities, and mannerisms! Those bear the Dickens trademark, and infringement is forbidden by all the laws of art.

The young upstart, who with the publication of *Pickwick* awoke, like Byron, to find himself famous, took his success with singular aplomb. A less solid head might easily have been turned, and then turned more as he proceeded from one triumph to another. But Dickens was sane in body and mind, and his humor was enough to keep ten men normal and sweetly reasonable. He had an excellent conceit of himself, as is shown, if by nothing else, by the multiple flourish of his signature. Having made a brilliant beginning as a humorist he set to work on his first serious novel, *Oliver Twist*.

If thousands of readers were joyfully surprised by the arrival of a young humorist, they must have been more surprised by his startlingly sudden appearance as a full-fledged writer of romance with an opulent variety of mood, action, character. All the elements of the Dickens we know, promised and sketched before, are realized in *Oliver Twist*, and what is here realized is in turn a promise of the later novels. First, the scenes and some of the characters are in the lowest sinks of iniquity and crime and suffering. Dickens makes that sordid life interesting. We all like criminals and crime, and he shared our liking and knew how to gratify it. In his passionate hatred of brutality and villainy he writes with a dramatic fervor which is a positive joy. And this police-court reporter knew what he was talking about; he differed from most reporters in the possession of supreme imagination. He knew the truth, the fact, and fetched it up from its dark hole into the sunlight of art. A few years ago a school of crime in which young boys were trained as thieves, pickpockets, and burglars was found in New York, and the newspapers told the story with some such headlines as: "Fagin and Boy Thieves Run Down by Police". People of the older generation knew what was meant, though it may be that many younger readers, even those fairly alert to modern fiction, have not yet had time to turn back to one who, if alive today, would be the most popular contributor to *The Saturday Evening Post* and a best seller every Christmas season. Fagin and Sikes and the Artful Dodger are true. Fifty years after the death of Dickens life has a persistent and perverse habit of reflecting accurately his most exaggerated situations and characters. If you had asked him whether he was realist or romanticist he would not have known what you meant. Discussion involving those two vexed words does not touch him, and indeed as applied by modern criticism to the later novel it often fails to be illuminating or discerning.

The second great element here is pathos. The boy Oliver in his wistful poverty goes to the heart, and I should not trust my purse or my honor to any reader who fails to respond to him. Dickens is the prose poet laureate of childhood, and I will agree cordially with anybody who, in a not too superior tone, cares to add, childhood of all ages. Nancy is touching. Like most of the Victorian novelists, Dickens was very tender with young women, and if he dresses them in muslin—like the heroine in *The Critic*, and sentimentalizes over them—that attitude, it seems, fairly represents what we males all do more than once from adolescence to old age. As a foil to the sweet young things, the Doras and little Em'lys, Dickens drew plenty of women with disagreeable traits, though he is seldom hard on them. The baser evils of human nature he embodies in men.

A third element is Dickens the "sociologist", the political radical attacking with satire, ridicule, invective, and hot scorn the

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abuses for which he holds the governing classes responsible, institutions mismanaged by incompetent and dishonest officials. Here it is the terrible Work House, which, honestly intended to help the poor, became a curse to them and to England. In his attack —this is the fourth element—he is most effective when he lets himself go in broad laughter. Mr. Bumble (what a name!) is all petty officialdom of all time. Only a master of humor could conceive that single line of the blustering impotent Bumble: "The law is an ass!" With that Dickens entered the company of the creator of Dogberry. The sharper kind of satirical portraiture, which underscores a single vice or foible is Noah Claypole, worthy forerunner of Uriah Heep.

The fifth element is natural human goodness, belief in the ultimate triumph of virtue. With Dickens this was an honest conviction and not a concession to the popular demand for happy endings, a demand, by the way, which is itself an expression of human nature. The native good humor of Charley Bates is a sort of ointment which protects him from the corroding air of Fagin, and he turns honest. Mr. Brownlow, the benevolent god of the machine, rescues Oliver and all is well. The redemption of Oliver is consoling and pleasant. The interest of the story, however, lies where Dickens purposely and avowedly placed it, in the dregs of life. Dickens believed this to be something new in fiction, and in treatment it was. Rogue literature was not new and pictures of misery and vice were as old as the Elizabethan dramatists and pamphleteers. Hogarth's pencil had drawn a terrible gallery of sinners with a boldness which even the courageous pen of Dickens could not equal. But the eighteenth century treatment of the criminal was either simple dare-devil adventure or it was cynical and ironic, as in Fielding's *Jonathan Wild*. It is to be noted in this connection that irony, sustained irony, the aristocratic cool smile of Fielding, is a form of humor that Dickens lacked. He had every other kind—farce, burlesque, hilarious mirth, satire, burning ridicule—but he is never, except in short passages, an ironist. His contribution to the literature of crime is his almost fierce exposure of it; in that he is very modern and was quite original and modern in his own time. Add that he was a born tale-teller, that *Oliver Twist* is a moving story in every sense, that its obvious artifices are only those that inhere in fiction, which is all fundamentally artificial, and you have the essential Dickens in this book, a new master established and undeniable.

Let us recall how this master developed from book to book and added to his swarm of people, his great market-place full of characters. Dickens lives in the living human beings whom he created. Even when he is at his best as story-teller, plot-maker (and he is not always at his best), even after he has held the world breathless with a smashing dramatic scene, what the world remembers is his people, no matter how they fit into a sequence of events, no matter what their destiny and fortune—that varied multitude of figures, comic, tragic, normal as your everyday neighbors, eccentric to the point of caricature or beyond it, attractive, tender, pathetic, repellent, vicious, ugly. It has been said that Dickens created a London of his own or for a period took monopolistic possession of a large part of a great city. Rather is it true that he invented an entire world of his own, a wonder-world, a fairy-tale world, grounded in reality (after all *Alice in Wonderland* is grounded in reality) and never more magical than when its inhabitants are evoked from closely observed actual and visible life.

While people, especially the bewildered critics, were still asking whether he could keep up the pace set by *Pickwick* and *Oliver Twist*, he gave the answer promptly in *Nicholas Nickleby*. The comic heroine of this book is Mrs. Nickleby, whose inconsequential garrulity is broad humor perfectly sustained. Compare Dickens's ability to make tiresome people amusing with Mr. Sinclair Lewis's exquisite talent for making the banality of life even more deadly stupid in fiction. The discovery that Ralph Nickleby is the father of Smike is a piece of trick-plotting, though perhaps no more artificial than the discovery of the father of Tom Jones. Dickens is by obvious evidence under the influence of the eighteenth century novelists, to his great profit in the directness and vigor of his early

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style; but he was sufficiently original to learn without being imitative. He had one thing that his models did not have: what we now call a "social sense". It is here expressed in his account of Dotheboys Hall. Whether he helped to rid England of its Squeerses, or whether without him the improvement of the schools was due to come about in the general slow progress of the world, it is hard to say. I suspect that we can put too much emphasis on Dickens the reformer (though he took himself very seriously as champion of the abused and oppressed) and that in thinking about social iniquities we may for too many minutes at a time lose sight of our humorist, entertainer, master of the comedy of manners. Manners good and bad. Against Squeers are set the amiable and generous Cheeryble Brothers, who embody the good in human nature which Dickens was never tired of celebrating.

Dickens, a monster of industry, followed up his successes with great rapidity and did not allow his growing public to forget him for a day. *The Old Curiosity Shop* is no advance in method or thought, but it adds to the diversity of creatures. Over the death of little Nell many of us, like Andrew Lang, decline to snivel. The horrible dwarf Quilp is remarkable for the very identification of him with his foul surroundings, a triumph of physical description of scene and character. Kit the hobbledehoy is one of many awkward youths for whom Dickens wins sympathy—he was from first to last a lover of the young. With Dick Swiveller and the Marchioness and the poor strolling showmen we are content to abide as long as Dickens chooses to keep them going. I remember with amusement the opinion of a Professor of English, whose experience and vision were bounded by the Back Bay of Boston, that such an innocent creature as the Marchioness could not have flourished in that environment. Dickens knew better; he had been there.

Barnaby Rudge is an experiment in the historical novel and has some of the merits and many of the faults of that *genre*. It is complex in plot, though not so complex that Poe's feat in foreseeing the end is a remarkable achievement. Dickens was always experimenting, and though he found himself early and though his general tone, method, texture, are pretty much the same from first to last, he did achieve an astonishing variety of invention as well as of character. The description of the Gordon riots is intense and the historic canvas is painted with the sweeping brush which was to prove even more powerful in *The Tale of Two Cities*. The eighteenth century flapper, Dolly Varden, caught the fancy of the public, and she is a charming minx. The hero of the tale is Grip the Raven. You remember that bird after you have forgotten the plot.

The fame of Dickens had, of course, spread to America, where he was immensely popular; and he was one of the first of several thousand English writers who have come over to read and lecture and collect a pocketful of the almighty American dollars. After his return from a triumphal tour he wrote *American Notes*, which offended his thin-skinned hosts of yesterday, but is, though confessedly a collection of superficial observations, an invaluable record of American society of the forties as seen by a very shrewd and not unsympathetic eye. Americans had no more reason to wince than Englishmen had to resent Dickens's portraits of English hypocrites, nincompoops, bounders and knaves. The artistic fruit of the journey is the American part of *Martin Chuzzlewit*. The failure of Eden, one of the miserable dashed hopes of a nation of boastful and excited expansion, is true to fact; there were many sad actual cases; for example, a few years earlier, the colony of Frenchmen whom the enthusiastic letters of Crèvecœur induced to immigrate to Ohio where they all miserably perished. As for the ballyhoo that Dickens satirized, we have not got over that yet; indeed we seem to be worse than ever, and we have not even the saving grace of the fine civilized New Englanders who were Dickens's contemporaries.

The best of *Martin Chuzzlewit* is the English part. Here is the eternal Pecksniff, brother of Tartuffe, and better, for Tartuffe is only a religious hypocrite, business for God, whereas Pecksniff is a bogus humanitarian, exactly the target for the shafts, or the terrific machine-gun, of Dickens, the passionate humanitarian. And here is Mrs.

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Gamp, type of the slut nurse whose tribe a noble Englishwoman, Florence Nightingale, with the help perhaps of Dickens and others, was to drive out and replace with trained and intelligent women. Tom Pinch is a good gentle soul, tenderly handled—a little too softly; I cannot stand the flowers of the peroration that are piled upon his honest head. Oddly enough the cheerful Mark Tapley is quite as tiresome as the buoyant and optimistic Americans; for once, at least, Dickens overstresses the note of good cheer.

Real good cheer, irresistibly ebullient, dominates the *Christmas Books,* a creation so peculiarly the spiritual property of Dickens that he seems to have (what he did not succeed in bringing about by law) an international copyright on the holiday. These books, which Thackeray called a national benefit, are the most direct emotional appeal of Dickens for sympathy with the poor. In some longer stories, *Hard Times,* for instance, the annals of the poor are neither short nor simple. In these Christmas tales the substance and treatment are elemental, primitive as folk-tales and indeed closely akin to Hans Christian Andersen who loved them. Christmas Eve is not quite complete without a reading aloud of *A Christmas Carol,* but it takes a fairly steady and controlled voice to get through it without a break.

For the serious part of *Dombey and Son,* the relations between father and daughter, and the death of little Paul, which is, if possible, worse than the death of little Nell, my utmost Dickensian loyalty refuses a tear, especially just after Tiny Tim, whose fake death is all that the warmest heart can endure. But Mrs. Pipchin and Captain Cuttle and Jack Bunsby, Toots, The Toodleses, Susan Nipper, Dr. Blimber, Mr. Feeder, Mrs. MacStinger—for these we will gladly go through the interminable hundreds of pages.

David Copperfield, which Dickens rightly regarded as his masterpiece, shows at its best and brightest every facet of his genius. It is autobiographical in form and, to some extent, in substance. Little Davy is little Charles, and that is why the story of the hero's childhood is so tender, intimate, accurate, so throbbing with emotion. When David grows up and begins to make his way as a writer, I find him and his love affairs much less interesting than the world through which he moves, its many characters and their stories as he observes them and takes part in them. The seduction of Emily and the drowning of Steerforth quite conveniently at Yarmouth, with David opportunely present to witness it, are sheer melodrama. But the description of the storm is magnificent. The glory and richness of the book are the throng of persons, among whom are to be found almost every comic type known to fiction and drama. It has been said that Dickens labels his characters; he does, and so do Shakespeare and Jonson and Molière. His marks of identification are sharp and unforgettable, sometimes perhaps too obvious. But if we think of our friends and acquaintances we find that we remember them by one or two simple characteristics, no matter how complex their hidden souls may be. In Dickens the lines may be too black, or too broad, or even too hard, but they draw the figure indelibly. We know more about ever hopeful and oratorical Micawber than we do about David himself. Rosa Dartle's scar occupies her entire cruel face and Uriah Heep's villainy is one hand-washing gesture, but you shall not forget them. Dickens was a born actor, a very successful amateur behind the footlights, and he knew the value of what stage folk call, or used to call, "characteristic". Subtlety of interpretation, psychological analysis (of which, as I find it in modern fiction, I for one am getting heartily sick) —all that is foreign to the genius of Dickens. His method and matter are simple, but that does not mean that they lack depth, solidity, understanding. What would Henry James or even Thackeray have learned sitting in Peggotty's boat? Mrs. Gummidge would have annoyed them. Every novelist must be judged and either accepted or rejected for his particular individual method, material, view of life. And for the catholic reader one kind does not utterly exclude another. Some readers are fortunate enough to be able to read *David Copperfield* and *The Wings of the Dove* in the same week.

Dickens matured early, so far as he ever

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matured, and is at the peak of his power when he is only thirty-eight. His high speed and intense heat burned him out, so that he died suddenly at the age of fifty-eight, an old man with a seamed and serious face. In those twenty years his vigor was unabated, and the old Dickens recurs again and again, to the ever increasing delight of his readers; but there are signs that he was wilfully driving himself (he had a relentless will), that there is a slight falling off in spontaneity, that he sought stimulation and nourishment in the physical applause which rewarded his many appearances in public. Like other stimulants, these triumphant public readings were in the end a heavy drain on his exuberant vitality. *Bleak House* is a forced and "made-up" book, with little of his natural charm and fun. The villain is a vast abstraction, but a very real thing, The Court of Chancery, somewhat as the Circumlocution Office is the villain of *Little Dorrit*. The book is, for Dickens, curiously cold. The alternation of the direct narrative and "Esther's Narrative" is a clumsy device. The Dedlocks are not interesting, because, I suspect, they are not the kind of people in whom Dickens was most interested. Tulkinghorn and Vholes are almost inhuman, or, rather, unhuman. The "spontaneous combustion" of Mr. Krook, soberly defended in the preface, is a strange illustration of how gullible a wise and observant man may be; perhaps that naïve credulity is the weak side of a great wonder-working imagination. But Dickens himself is here, much of the time, almost in full force; in little Jo, the waif of the streets whose older brother is Oliver Twist; in Mrs. Jellyby with her charity that begins anywhere but at home (an immortal woman who has nothing to do with the story but is the best thing in it); and in the ineffable Chadband, all Terewth and train-oil. Finally those who like mystery yarns will find this a good one, if somewhat complicated, and they will meet in Mr. Bucket the first of a swelling army of fictitious police-detectives.

Dickens is becoming more sober, less gay, and somewhat disillusioned. *Hard Times* is a sort of tract in story form directed against his idea of the Manchester *laissez-faire* school of economics. Carlyle called economics—meaning the Manchester school, which was about all there was at the time—"the dismal science". Dickens dramatized it as such. Bounderby represents the self-made capitalist in his most vulgar aspect. Gradgrind represents the statistical pedantry which supports the economic *status quo*. The plea for justice for the workers and the picture of ugly smoky Coketown of course appealed to Ruskin, who thought this the best book of Dickens. But it is not the best. The preacher gets the upper hand of the story-teller and the humorist. Yet the tragedy of Rachael and Stephen is honestly sad, and the laugh-maker is himself again in Sleary, Childers, and the horse-riders. There is even a kind of sardonic humor in the fact-household, where it "hailed facts all day long" on Sissy Jupe's head. But there is nothing funny in the sacrifice of Gradgrind's daughter Louisa nor in the demoralization of his son, "The Whelp", a kind of retribution in which the novelist, not life, takes a forced revenge. *Little Dorrit* is even more didactic, and may simply be set down as Dickens's one great flat failure.

He turned immediately from these social realities to his historical novel, *A Tale of Two Cities*. This story of the French Revolution was perhaps suggested by Carlyle's work; indeed in its color, vividness, dramatic action, the story rather more than suggests a debt to its great contemporary, and Dickens mentions Carlyle in his preface. At the lowest estimate this is ripping good melodrama, and that perhaps is enough. Scott had established the historical novel, and several of the Victorians carried on the tradition, Bulwer-Lytton in several still readable tales, Thackeray in *Esmond*, George Eliot in *Romola*, Charles Reade in *The Cloister and the Hearth*. Dickens was not, as were many of his contemporaries, a romantic lover of the past, but lived intensely in the present. To give what he felt to be the right tone and color he forged an artificially elevated style, more "literary" than that which usually flowed out of him, easy and apparently effortless. He sustains this new manner fairly well and there is no question that it carries his story. The wonder of it is that he shows

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to his ever eagerly expectant public that at the age of forty-seven he can do something that he has not done before. But it is not the real Dickens.

After this excursion to the past of a foreign land he returns home to the English country and the Thames and to his youth in *Great Expectations,* the most delightful book of his later years. Not even his own Copperfield surpasses or indeed quite equals the first chapters about Pip—perfect art, perfect revelation of the heart of a boy. The narrative has gusto and excitement through the dramatic scene in which the convict attempts to escape with the aid of Pip. Joe Gargery is one of the best of Dickens's simple, honest souls; and Magwitch, Plumblechook and Wemmick belong in the company of the immortals. The fantastic story of Miss Havisham is an example, of which there are too many, of Dickens's habit of introducing sub-plots that have nothing to do with the leading theme. The "tight", economical construction is not in the genius of Dickens.

His last important book, except the vivacious sketches thrown out with inexhaustible fecundity under the happy title of *The Uncommercial Traveller* and the tantalizingly unfinished *Edwin Drood,* is *Our Mutual Friend.* Intelligent admirers of Dickens may well have trembled at this book (his general readers had learned to accept anything he gave them). For here are certain signs—though perhaps our wisdom is after the fact—that he was breaking down. His more critical readers were accustomed to expect from him books with a heavy burden of faults upon their great unbreakable backs. But here was a new kind of weakness. Dickens was out of sorts, and, as Jo said, "it draws heavy as a cart and rattles like it". Some of the old power is here; in the water-side scenes you can smell and taste the river. Podsnap, the self-appointed partner of God, of whose name Dickens himself made a common noun, "Podsnappery", which the language has accepted, belongs in the gallery with Pecksniff and Chadband. But the love story is conventional and the mystery of the identity of John Harmon is not held up with any sort of interest, for all Dickens's rather lame and assertive explanation in the Postscript. The real weakness of the book is that Dickens with a strange new sweeping bitterness (he had been bitter many times about certain specific things that he detested) seems to have a grudge against all society, high and low. His attacks on the Poor Law are violent and scornful. There is something almost vicious in the final depositing of the disreputable Wegg in the scavenger's cart. And the good elements in the story are less than usually convincing. The Dolls' Dressmaker is too saccharine even for Dickens. The trick of the worthy Boffin who pretends to be a screw is too slender to hold the weight that is put upon it. Perhaps the gods are wise. Perhaps it was well that the master hand which had created a world should soon lay down the pen. That world lives forever.

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BOOKS IN AN OLD HOUSE

By Mary Graham Bonner

THE old house is very much of a person. It has been gay and festive, lending itself with quite an air to embellishment and decoration. It has been dignified and aloof about its sorrow. But more than anything else it has been loyal to the various members of the family who have occupied it since they moved from New England to New York State considerably over a hundred years ago, for it has never disturbed their book-cases.

It has had a mild curiosity in the new books and magazines that have been put upon its tables from time to time, but only a few have edged their way into the many book-cases, which are of all sizes and are to be found in the halls, bedrooms, parlors, and even the garret. Somehow I have never felt the house was the place for my books, so I invariably bring them back with me after visits and press them into my bookily overcrowded apartment. Such books as belonged to my childhood and of which the house eminently approved are still there. I've never felt I should take them away. That's the sort of house it is. It has the say. So there are all of Parkman and Henty and Kipling and Thomas Hughes's great school stories, and Captain Mayne Reid, and Hawthorne, and Lewis Carroll and Louisa Alcott and the Waverley novels and Dickens and Cooper and Bulwer-Lytton and Washington Irving and Mrs. Craik, and Mark Twain and John Fiske and M. L. Weems (some day I'm going to have the audacity to put a new life of Washington between the book by Weems and one of the five volumes by Washington Irving) and many others. Not far from my book-case is one that belonged to my mother's childhood, in which the Rollo books and the Franconia stories and her beloved set of Shakespeare occupy places of honor.

There have been dissenters. My mother looks at any new book or periodical I bring in almost before it has reached the table. She won't subscribe to one or two of the more disrespectful magazines, but she is constantly telling me that if I "happen" to have any copies to be sure to send them to her when I finish with them. She expresses her disapproval of biographies that deflate heroic pomposities, but depends upon me to keep her supplied with them. Then there was an uncle who read Omar to me when I was eleven and gloriously did fatalistic gloom combine with my other youthful emotions. He had a copy of the Koran that was also my delight, and his reading of poetry was a joy that forever will keep its cadences in the memory.

But the upstarts have been few. And the house shouldn't have to be responsible for me and for my general book avidity. Only half of me has the New England background. Largely the house has had solid, dependable, reliable, proud, reticent people, and even their literary thoughts have been kept inviolate by the house. The books that they have left behind in the cases, the books that somehow the house sees to it are still remaining there, give no clue to the thoughts of these ancestors who look down upon us from their portraits. They are garbed stiffly, and it was the custom among people such as they to hold a prayerbook; but despite the prominent book of praise and the austere attire there is a twinkle of merriment somewhere that makes one curious. What did they think? What did they feel? What did they make of it all? There are glorious little books of poems printed separately—Gray, Pope, Cowper, Bryant, Milton—many of them individual poems printed singly with enchanting illustrations taken from old engravings and pictures. There was always a great deal of poetry around the house. Emotions couched in verse were apparently admitted, and the slender, exquisite books of sometimes quaint but always beautiful verse have been a permanent delight of mine when

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I have taken to one of my foraging trips around the house.

Of course there are all the old classics—though Balzac was never admitted until I begged hard for him and was backed in my opinion by Bishop Henry Codman Potter, who gave me assistance with many a book-innovation.

There are innumerable histories, and books dealing with development in counties and states. Senators in the old days seemed to find more time to write memoirs and topographical histories. Reports on boundary surveys and treaties are all bound in handsome old yellow leather bindings with fine pictures. There are books on border wars and early troubles before the Revolution—then again before the Civil War. There are the "Memoirs and Letters of Dolly Madison", and there are all the bound volumes of *Harper's, Atlantic Monthly,* and, of more recent time, the *St. Nicholas.* "Little Dorrit" is in a bound *Harper's* that I came across on my last meanderings, and *Harper's* also used many poems and sketches from the *Dublin University Magazine, Bentley's Monthly Miscellany* and *The Ladies' Companion.* The jokes, styles and pictures are amusing in design but essentially perennial. Most conspicuous was the anonymity of the authors in both *Harper's* and *The Atlantic.* Hardly a poem, article or story was signed (*St. Nicholas* apparently always used signatures).

But mostly the house abounds in books of a "good" character, though there was never a minister in the household; and while all the members of the family doubtless felt they dealt quite generously in good works, good works were never their absorption.

Perhaps this is true of other houses of this period, and with this background, where the books have been allowed to remain untouched and unsold. But I have not had the opportunity to browse backwards in many old houses.

There are Bibles in profusion. There are New Testaments and Old, bound separately, individually there are apocrypha and apocalyptical volumes, the Psalms, hymns, and even the house is built with a religious angle, for architecturally there is something in the front hall decidedly resembling a pulpit and used by the succeeding generations of children as a place from which they could admonish any younger children who were willing to serve as denounced congregations upon the stairs.

And there are sermons. Sermons on "Fulfilling of the Scriptures", lives of Ministers, "Jerry McAulay: His Life and Work", "John Todd, Story of his Life Told Mainly by Himself". This latter shows plenty of tolerance. Here is one of his letters written from Philadelphia:

"We have here two General Assemblies of the Presbyterians. Both claim to the *real* assembly; and it is amusing to see a farce so solemn and in many respects so poorly played. I laugh at them, and tell them that they are now like a clam which is split open, and are quarreling to see which is the upper shell, when the *meat* is gone out of it."

Here are just a few other titles: "The Truth and Life", twenty-two Sermons by the Rt. Rev. C. P. McIlvaine, "Memoirs of Rev. Benjamin C. Cutler", "Hours with the Bible, from Creation to the Patriarchs", by Cunningham Geikie (and his authorities are well-nigh endless), "Picture Testament for the Young, Containing a Harmony of the Gospels and the Acts of the Apostles", published in 1835 and illustrated by old engravings of lively artistic feeling, "Holy Living and Holy Dying", by Jeremy Taylor, "The Gospel Mystery of Sanctification, Opened in Sundry Practical Directions, Suited Especially to the Case of Those who Labour Under the Guilt and Power of Indwelling-Sin to which is added a Sermon on Justification to which is prefixed a Recommendation by Eleven Divines".

This last tome of purified advice was published in 1811, and now and again I came across dim pencil markings where virtue triumphed over vice in all of the unequal verbal arguments contained therein.

There are a good many books on medical subjects, one entitled "Medical Inquiries and Observations", by Benjamin Rush, Medical Professor of the Institutes of Medicine and of Clinical Practice in the University of Pennsylvania, published in 1794, read in 1774. This book has, as have all of this

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period, much in the way of sub-titular explanation. On the front page of this is the following: "An Inquiry into the Natural History of Medicine Among the Indians of North America and a Comparative View of their Diseases and Remedies with Those of Civilized Nations". There is an appendix on "Observations on the duties of a physician and the methods of improving medicine, accommodated to the present state of Society and Manners in the United States", in which farm life for the doctor is urged in this fashion: "The resources of a farm will create such an independence as will enable you to practice with more dignity, and at the same time screen you from the trouble of performing unnecessary services to your patients . . . The resources of a farm will prevent your cherishing, for a moment, an impious wish for the prevalence of sickness in your neighborhood".

There are also markings to be found in "Elements of Logick: Or A Summary of the General Principles and Different Modes of Reasoning", by Levi Hedge, Professor of Logic and Metaphysicks, in Harvard College, 3rd edition 1821. Such a passage as the following received double pencil attention: "The purpose of Logick is to direct the intellectual powers in the investigation of truth, and in the communication of it to others".

The irrelevant and incongruous book experiences of "Sibrandus Schafnaburgensis" were no more astonishing than to find "The Lamp Lighter" next door to a very modern novel. The former ends with a spiritual quotation: "Thy sun shall no more go down, neither shall thy moon withdraw itself; for the Lord shall be thine everlasting light and the days of thy mourning shall be ended". So was happiness brought to the heroine. And in the neighboring, modern book—"You're getting a little bald spot up here", she murmured tenderly. "Did you know that, cutie?"

While on the other side was a book bearing this inscription:

"Short Discourses to be Read in Families," by William Jay (1807) on religious subjects such as "The Punishment of Adoni-Bezek".

This very critical title and sub-title took my eye in the next book: "A Call to the Unconverted to Turn and Live and Accept of Mercy, while Mercy may be had, as Ever they will find Mercy in the Day of their Extremity, from The Living God", by the late Rev. and Pious Richard Baxter (1811). The preface is "To all Unsanctified Persons that shall read this Book: Especially of my Hearers in the Borough and Parish of Kederminster".

Many of the authors are appealing and human in their introductions and dedications, and one author of a little worn book entitled "The Scrap Table" has dedicated his work "To the Citizens of Boston", but has merely signed his work "The Author".

This is the preface of Ezra Sampson, written in 1820, for his book "The Brief Remarks on the Ways of Man: Or Comendious Dissertations, Respecting Social and Domestic Relations and Concerns and the Various Economy of Life: Designed for, and Adapted to, the Use of American Academies and Common Schools":

"Might I hope that these essays will be benefitting the community, not only during the short remainder of my life, but even after my mortal part shall have been enclosed in the grave, it would tend to smooth and gild my passage to that dreary mansion. If they should be read by many, and with profit; if they should be the means of curing peccant dispositions of erroneous conceptions in some, and of preventing them in others; if not a few, by perusing these chapters should receive real aid in the snary and perilous journey of their lives, and be made, in any respects, wiser and better thereby, I shall have attained the summit of my ambition.

"To the American youth of both sexes I dedicate this little volume, and with it some of the best wishes of my heart.

"Farewell, beloved pen: thou dear companion of lonely age, thou sweet beguiler of my vacant and solitary hours, I now bid thee a final adieu. Ezra Sampson, Hudson, August 4, 1820."

A book also regarded with apparent admiration, judging from the various names of members of the family who wrote their signatures within was Fénelon's "Treatise on

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the Education of Daughters: Translated from the French, and Adapted to English Readers, with an Original Chapter 'On Religious Studies' ", by the Rev T. F. Dibdin, B. A. F. A. S., author of "An Introduction to the Knowledge of the Best Editions of the Greek and Latin Classics".

Within is a picture of a mother and child —and the mother's dress is very low and her neck very beautiful. But here are some of the words on the teaching of women: "It is true, that we should be on our guard not to make them ridiculously learned. Women, in general, possess a weaker but more inquisitive mind than men; hence it follows that their pursuits should be of a quiet and sober turn. They are not formed to govern the state, to make war, or to enter into the church; so that they may well dispense with any profound knowledge . . . Their bodies as well as minds are less strong and energetic than those of men; but to compensate for their defects, nature has bestowed on them a spirit of industry, united with a propriety of behaviour, and an economy which renders them at once the ornament and comfort of home".

There is a chapter on how women should choose and retain servants, and one on teaching a girl to read and write correctly: "It is a shameful thing, but too common, to see women of understanding and good breeding, who cannot accurately pronounce what they read: I would allow also, but with great care, the perusal of works of eloquence and poetry, if I saw they had a taste for them, and solidity of judgment enough to confine themselves to their real use; but fearful of agitating too much their lively imaginations, I would have the utmost caution observed in this respect; everything that may awaken the sentiments of love, seems to me the more dangerous in proportion as it is softened and disguised. Music and Painting require the same precautions".

In 1820 was also published "Elegant Lessons or the Young Lady's Preceptor: Being a series of Appropriate Reading Exercises in Prose and Verse: carefully selected from the Most Approved Authors, for Female Schools and Academies", by Samuel Whiting, Esq. There are recommendations in the book from John Trumbull, judge, and De Witt Clinton, Governor of the State of New York. The former, also an ancestor, makes this didactic blurb: "They will assist in training up the youthful mind to delicacy and virtue, and in forming a taste for the beauties of elegant language, and correct phraseology". The Governor speaks in the traditionally correct scholastic tone—handed down to the present day: "I have read with much pleasure a manuscript, intended for publication, entitled, 'Elegant Lessons or the Young Lady's Preceptor: Being a series of Appropriate Reading Exercises in Prose and Verse', by Samuel Whiting, Esq., and I consider it a very useful and judicious compilation, and worthy of public encouragement. Albany, March 20, 1820".

There is a fine array of selected moral sentences, and extracts from Milton, the Bible, and so forth, telling always of good behavior and the sorrow of misdemeanor. I had never realized that Eve felt so badly leaving the Garden of Eden as I did when I read what the preceptor had to say about it. Poor Eve!

And then I came across a book called "U. S. Primer". It had everything in it—everything instructive in the most painfully good way where life and learning were paths beset with troubles to be traversed with one's minds always on the ultimate and unbeatable goal. Even in the alphabet the letter "Y" has this cheering couplet:

Youth's forward slip
Death soonest nips,

and there is a horrible picture of a little boy being speared by Death, a skeleton, who has been chasing him.

This is as gay as the book ever becomes. I suppose it could be called an interlude. It is entitled "Charles":

"Charles, you must not go into the fields by yourself, nor without leave. You know you are a very little boy, and if you were to venture out by yourself you would be lost. CHARLES, when a big boy, shall have breeches, and a little pair of boots, and then he shall go into the dirt; and he shall have a pretty little horse of his own, and a saddle

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and bridle, and whip, and then he shall ride out with his papa."

But here is a part from the book when it is feeling its typical self. It is headed "To be learned by heart", and it is called "Uncertainty of Life", and its audience is supposed to be the very young:

I in the burying place may see
Graves shorter far than I;
From Death's arrest no age is free;
Young children too may die.

My God, may such an awful sight
Awakening be to me!
Oh! that by early grace I might
For death prepared be.

It was becoming very discouraging. I had always been encouraged by so much poetry but here in a thorough book-browsing period I had seen more and more abnormally "good" books. Yet this didn't agree with the expressions in the faces of the ancestors as they gazed down upon us from their portraits. There were twinkles and reserved thoughts, and inner chuckles—I had always felt sure of it. Why couldn't their books have revealed a little more of their ideas? I had probed, and had come up baffled. And then I came across a bound volume of *The Spectator*. Various family names had been written in this. There were book marks of ribbon, but only one passage marked with pencil—though several pencils had added their markings in this same place: "The wise man is happy when he gains his own approbation, and the fool when he recommends himself to the applause of those about him".

They were not going to let us know what they thought—those merrily solemn ancestors—to admire or to scoff. They were happy in their own self-containing. But pressed in the yellow pages of the book was a tiny, withered, shrivelled thing that had once been a fragrant rose-bud.

And sentiment is dateless.

H. GlintenKamp

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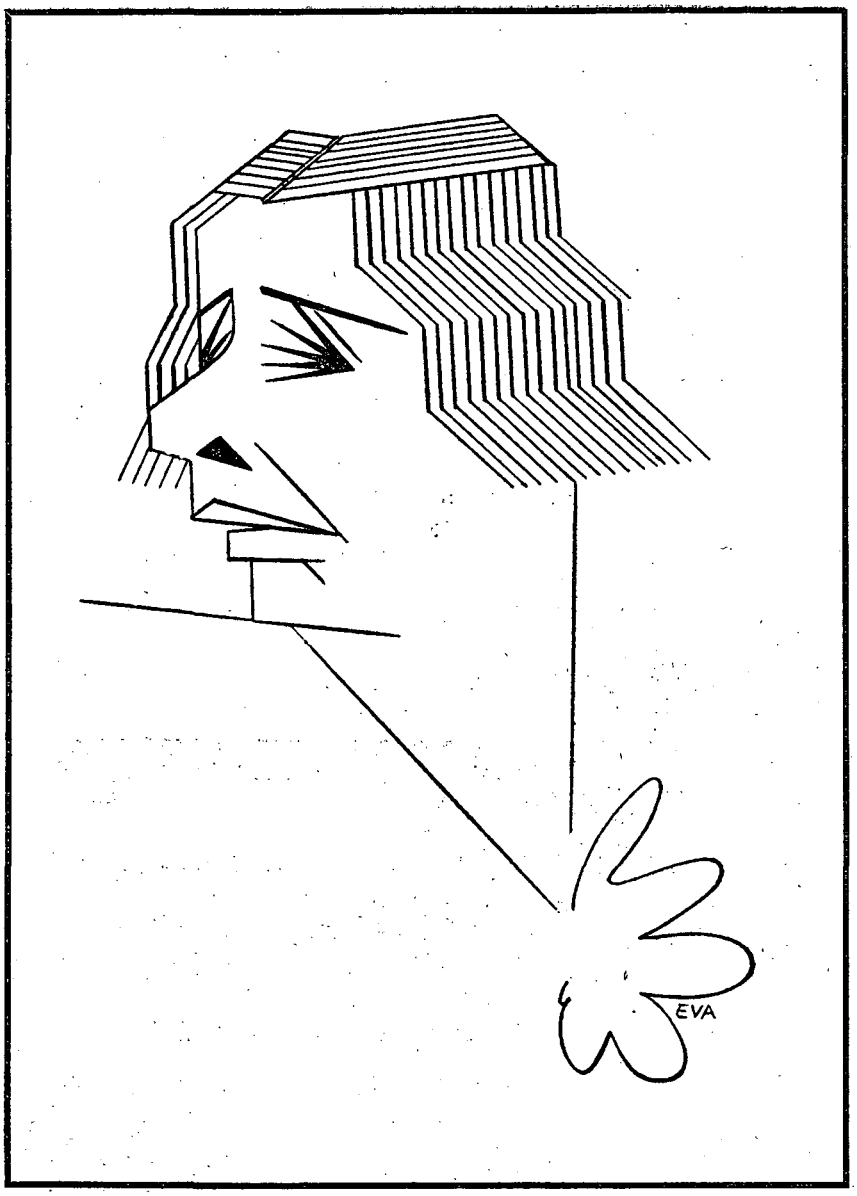

Rebecca West, whose first book since her novel, "The Judge", is a volume of criticism and esthetic theory, "The Strange Necessity". Miss West has become The Bookman's roving correspondent in Europe, and will contribute a monthly article.

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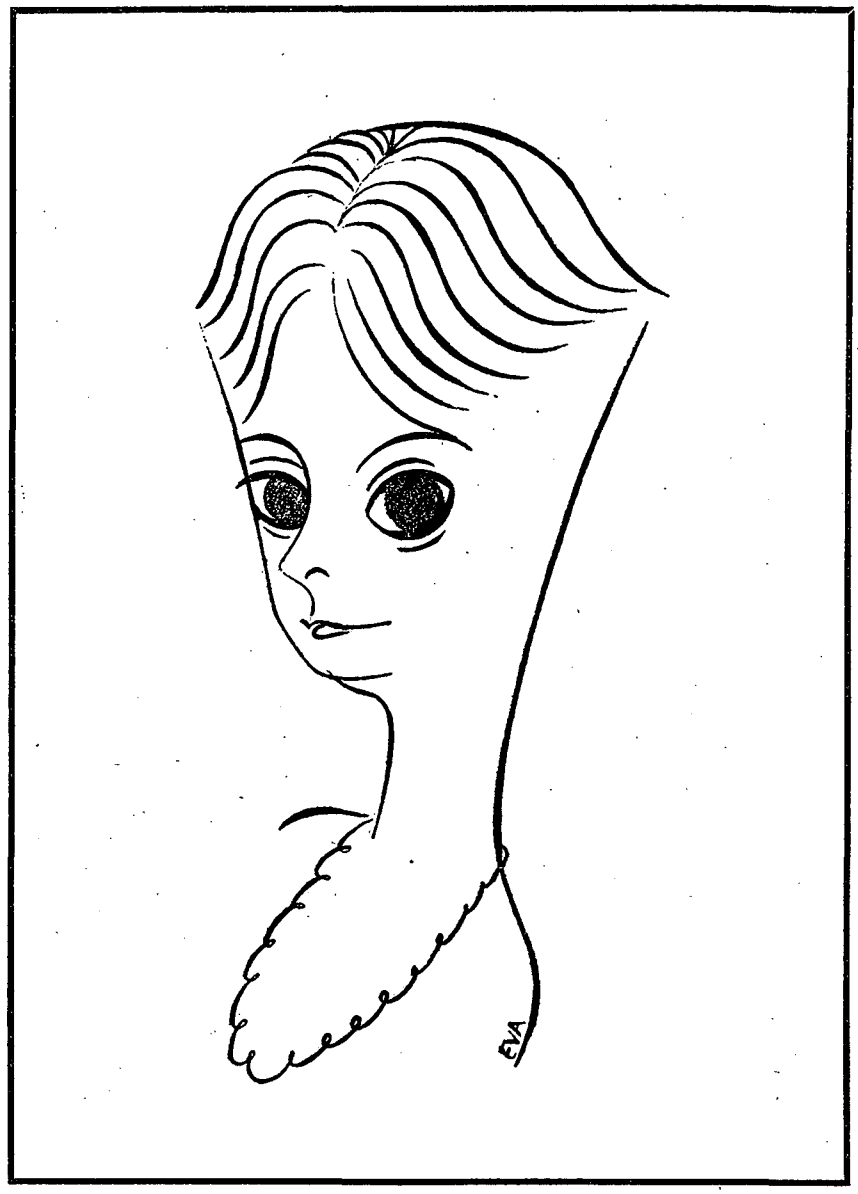

Dorothy Parker, artist in prose and verse, in moods varying from light to satiric to sentimental to serious to tragic. Two volumes of her poems have been published, "Enough Rope" and "Sunset Gun".

Caricatures by Eva Herrmann

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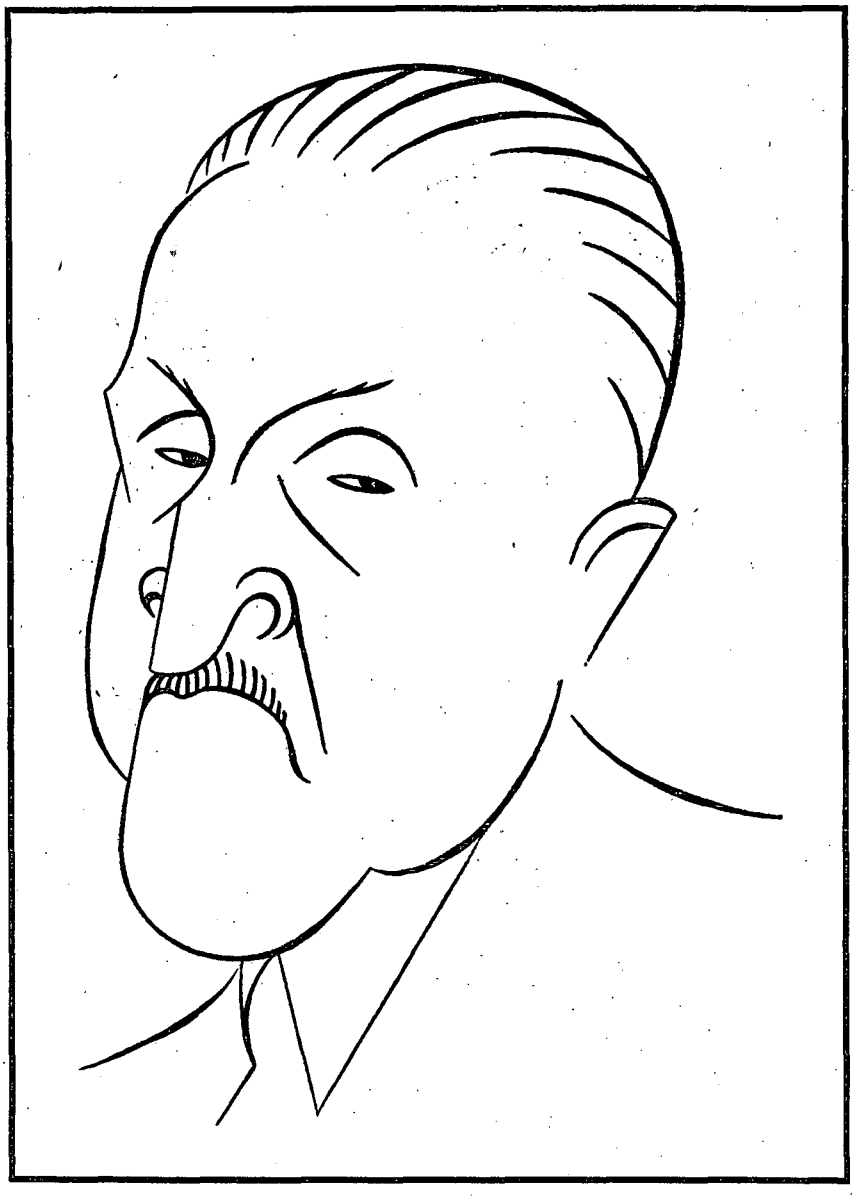

Somerset Maugham, novelist and playwright, whose great novel, "Of Human Bondage", reaches a large new public each year. Mr. Maugham visited New York this autumn to superintend the production of his latest play, "The Sacred Flame".

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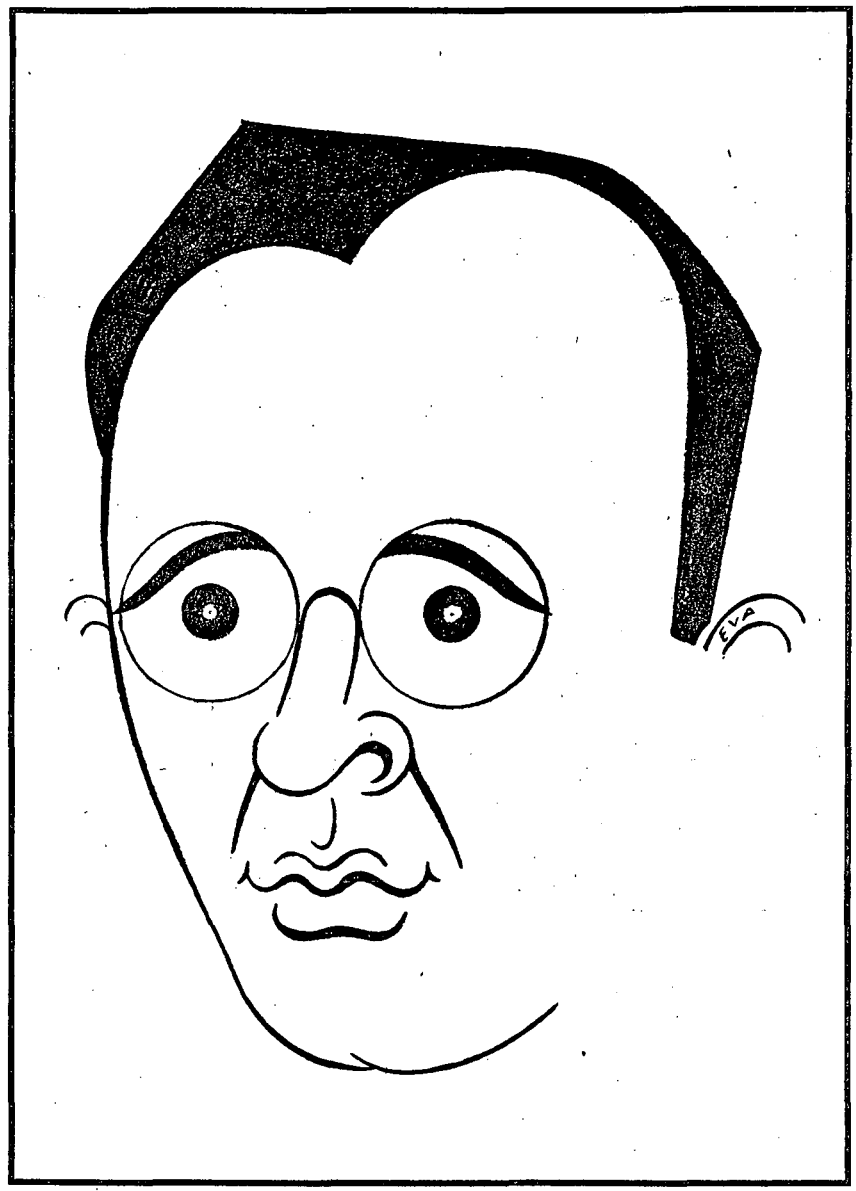

Samuel Hoffenstein, author of "Poems in Praise of Practically Nothing", a volume which has carried the fame of this gifted parodist and poet from a small circle of enthusiasts to a wide section of the reading public.

Caricatures by Eva Herrmann

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THE DEVIL IS BORED

The Habit-Forming Drug of Words

By Muriel Draper

READING written words is a major pastime of the twentieth century. It has aspects that conform to the basic demands made of current pastimes. It can be accomplished passively; neither talent, work nor genuine thought are necessary to its performance. It confers prestige without distinction, nourishes the desire for experiencing without active participation and therefore contributes generously to the contemporary ideal of Having it Both Ways.

Words are written and bound into books and magazines, folded into newspapers. People buy books in drug stores and book stores and dog shops, rent them from libraries and take them from friends. These books they read. Thousands of people sit reading books . . . they sit on chairs in houses and in seats on trains. They stand reading in subways. Little effort is needed to carry a book, and even two or three do not strain the carrying capacity of the average man or woman. Newspapers can be bought fresh every hour in many streets and all stations, or picked up less fresh in taxis, restaurants and trains. While larger in area than books, they are of negligible weight and durability and therefore less guiltily deserted, for weight and indestructibility automatically engage respect. Millions of people buy newspapers, but do not read all of the written words. Magazines, nicely poised between the two, are sold near one or the other. Often heavier than books, the attention thus due them is cancelled by the modesty of their commercial claim, a balanced neutrality that is irritatingly maintained to the end of their existence, when, not worth selling and difficult to burn, they sulk in corners, awaiting the Salvation Army. However, they contain pictures and indexes and advertisements and stories and poetry and articles (this is one), and are more or less astutely planned to be read and looked at. Almost everyone who buys one does read or look at it,—sometimes both.

And there are the advertisements! Fascinating aloof world of gold and colored words written on small squares and circles, on curved rectangles and vast boards; bright words of light that move amidst buildings and dark skies. These too can be read,—must be read. The words walk into your eyes.

Bulk of written words then, is not a serious barrier to the pastime of reading.

It is possible that if books were as big as houses fewer people would read.

Learning to read is compelled by law at an age when obedience involves less work than resistance. It is an age when the desire to learn any specific thing is less active than the threats fore-shadowed by the spectre of divergence, and the power of resistance itself seems dependent upon learning to read and write and add. Strange little shapes and lines become letters, letters make words and words convey sensations. Other shapes are numbers, numbers grow into figures and figures protect facts. Fingers held this way or that on a pen reproduce these shapes and one learns to read and write and add. Not really hard work. Not so hard as the work exacted by the secret nourishment of power in divergence that begins at the same age. Indeed, it would be a task for the average human being in the twentieth century not to learn to read. Talent is born of power in divergence, but does not flourish in obedience. Some can read faster than others, the handwriting of some is prettier than that of others, and columns of figures can be added correctly by people who can do nothing else.

Words can roller-skate over the polished wooden surface of the mind without raising

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a splinter of thought. They evoke images, provide justification and provoke sensations by association. Word magic. Ideal pastime. Who can resist the flattering solace (alone with a book because there is no person to be with) of reading "Seclusion, which has so many advantages, has also its little annoyances and drawbacks, which are small, however, in comparison with those of society; hence anyone who is worth much in himself will get on better without other people than with them"? The pleasant rationalization of enforced solitude this offers can remain through many pages covered with the written words of a thinking man, and dim the outline of any thought that might appear. Might appear. By the time one reaches "Reading is thinking with some one else's head instead of one's own", one is already under the spell of the "man who thinks for himself, forms his own opinions and learns the authorities for them only later on, when they serve but to strengthen his belief in them and in himself". So everything comes out right in the end. Indeed, just before falling asleep, a statement like "It seems to me that genius might have its root in a certain perfection and vividness of the memory as it stretches back over the events of past life" makes everything perfectly clear, and dreamless sleep is attained, with memories of others and less isolated evenings as substitutes for thoughts.

How comforting, while reading literature, and prize literature at that, to find these words written: "In the presence of literature they had the same darkling intelligence that stirs for a time behind the eyes of a dog, but they sat on patiently". . . . And, if memory is lacking in the perfection and vividness that are possible roots of genius, to transcend it in reading, "even memory is not necessary for love". Thought, indeed!

Pick up a learned book on the History of Civilization (a very heavy and respectable book this), and, determined to think, begin to read the table of contents. Listed under "Statement of the Resources for Investigating History, and Proofs of the Regularity of Human Actions", resist, if you can, items such as "Narrow Range of Knowledge Possessed by Historians . . . History is the Modification of Man by Nature, and of Nature by Man . . . Statistics Prove the Regularity of Actions in regard to Murder and Other Crimes . . . Similar Proof Respecting Suicides . . . Also Respecting the Number of Marriages Annually Contracted . . . Also Respecting the Number of Letters Sent Undirected". What an enchanting parade of contemporary events costumed in history to seduce our minds from thought. The table of contents proceeds, truthfully enough: "The Imagination is Excited by Earthquakes and Volcanoes . . . And By Danger Generally". It is. And how recently have we felt that "The Interference of Politicians with Trade has Injured Trade . . . Legislators have caused Smuggling with all its Attendant Crimes". By the time we reach "The Earliest Histories are Ballads . . . One Cause of Error in History was the Invention of Writing", we are immune to the scornful implications of recorded events grouped as believed absurdities, particularly when they refer to "The Work of Dr. Horst on the Golden Tooth". We roller-skate right on.

If reading words were as difficult as playing a trumpet, publishers would be in a bad way. Trumpeting is a minor pastime.

In this period of history, the greatness of man is either so universal or so rare that the outer and inheritable distinctions conferred upon it by apparel, rank and title are fallen into disuse or disregard. Honorable fruit of democracy this may be, but dull eating. The burden of proof becomes heavy, and man looks about him for easily captured casual splendors with which to lighten it. The air is stained with broadcasting thin-spread voices, the earth is packed with gosomewhereing people, the mind is drugged with drab mythologies and staggeringly purposeless inventions, curiosity is enfeebled by games of answers that restate the questions, the Devil is too bored to be active and splendor is nowhere. But man can read, and woman too. Momentary prestige may be had for the reading. Books, newspapers and magazines! Hurry. Get there first if possible. Read it or know about it, before it appears in the market, if you would scale the heights. In

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any case, have read it when the time comes, and then talk about it. Talk about it.

Dynasties of an hour have been built at dinner on the last twelve pages of Proust. The last twelve pages of Proust. No one could have read Proust's final volume through in a day, however fast they learned to read, yet a few hours after its appearance those last twelve pages were discussed, compared and quoted. He became the greatest writer of our times, for ever, for a day, for a drink, on those last twelve pages. If you were at your newsstand in time, you could compare Thornton Wilder to him, because they both express dislike of sickness. Lots of people do. Bloodless revolutions of a day have been led and lost or forgotten by those who have read a dear good dull forbidden book written by an unhappy girl who listened too long to the song of the cuckoo in England. Switzerland has a literature, though not a navy. Very good talk this makes. Boswell has come to rest on Long Island (he probably likes it), and profound scholars faint and fight as great chemists strive to remove sable garments of ink from buried words. That vantage point is good for a week.

Not permanent distinctions, these, nor inheritable, but to be competed for and won without gain.

Like a woman, the twentieth century sits explaining itself. It must be understood. It must be excused for its self-indulgence while it seeks out the reasons for it. Once found, the reasons will explain the self-indulgence and no excuses will be necessary, for all will be understood and forgiven—in a blue muslin gown and a black velvet hat, in the last act. And it can go home and sit down and begin all over again—to be very busy about not being. Other centuries have sacrificed the charm of explanation for the more rigorous adventure of active being. Not this one. Not yet. However, understanding and forgiving and loving oneself is interesting and stimulates considerable intellectual activity. It also creates a deceptively intelligent self-protection, without challenging the divine dangers of self activity. Written words are inspired tools for such work. Through them, as one sits reading, one may conjecture and speculate about one's own life and the life of others, dramatizing the one and belittling the other, and not participate in life at all. This is Having it Both Ways.

Human beings who can create the power to survive the conditions of life they do not control are not lulled into waking sleep by the silent hum of written words—but where are they?

One book, were it as big as a house, as difficult to read as a trumpet to play, impossible to discuss without loss of prestige, I would read—if it was written by a wise man who had never read or penned a word—and that would be a book on Why We Do Not Behave Like Human Beings.

If these things are untrue of the major pastime of reading written words, no one will have read this far.

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THE PRINTED WORD

With Respects To Those Who Print It

By Wilson Follett

YOU open your morning paper. Before you have read a word, cut out at random a clipping the width of one column and the length of two or three moderate sentences —say, two and a half inches broad by two inches deep. Now examine your snippet. On one or the other of its two sides, if not on both, you are confronting a grammatical atrocity, or a non-existent word, or a respectable word abused, or a pied metaphor, or a hopelessly unintelligible locution, or a startling misprint, or an outrageous syllabic division.

The chances are better than even that you will find at least one of these annoyances on the first side you read. That you will find at least one of them on the first side or the second, the chances vary from two to one up to a dead certainty. There are dailies which would not disappoint the searcher for these kinds of trouble thrice in a thousand such experiments. There are others, metropolitan journals with the name of being uncommonly well written and capably edited, in which you have little better than a one-to-one chance of observing a mis-cue in any given area of four square inches picked at random. But such papers are rare, and stand at the very apex of contemporary printed literacy in their class.

When you examine the general run of national weeklies you find that they improve the proportion: some average as few as half a dozen solecisms to the page. The better monthlies may escape with half a dozen to the average full article. Once or twice in a year, you pick up a whole book that contains fewer than a dozen in its three hundred pages. There are not many such volumes among the eight or nine thousand printed per annum in the United States.

Let down your trawl into any miscellaneous mass of contemporary printed matter. You cannot avoid bringing up, along with whatever else, a great mass of such queer fish as these:

However, the Cleveland situation compared with those of Chicago, Detroit and St. Louis, appears to be infinitely better than those cities.—*New York Telegram.*

This kind of thing cannot be overcome by argument with it but by transcending it.—Leading editorial in the New York *World.*

Due to overwork in Hollywood, his convalescence was slow.—Ella Winter, in *The American Magazine.* Also, from the same article: His contact with his wife is not made only after he has been plowing his weary brains eight hours a day, and has become nervous and irritable—due to the strain of business life.

We could win if we made the breaks and not wait for them.—William F. Adler, captain of the Columbia University football team.

And now, having mourned Philip Bancroft far more bitterly than if he were dead, he had joined the home-going steamer at its last stop.—Lucy Stone Terrill in *The Saturday Evening Post.* (It is Philip Bancroft who joins the steamer, and it is the heroine who has mourned him.)

Each accused the other with such vigor that detectives were at a loss as to whom should be charged with the murder.—News item in the New York *World.*

We never expect to hear anybody praised again, but it shall not be said of us that we denied the public an opportunity to do so.—Jay E. House in the *Philadelphia Public Ledger.*

They were just ordinary stage plays relayed on to the radio audience like a symphony concert might be.—Graham McNamee in *The American Magazine.*

Because he has his own opinion on the matter is no reason why he should prohibit

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the schools to enter the contest which would be so beneficial for the youth of the city.—From a statement by W. O. Heffernan.

Lepanomo has to choose between a fiery death at the hands of Blackfeet or marriage with the villainous Leroux.—Will Cuppy in *Books, New York Herald Tribune.*

Like the Elizabethan, Robert Greene, the folly of his life was only too apparent.—Edwin Clark in *The New York Times Book Review.*

We have planes which climb seven miles into the air and can fight at a speed and altitude that was impossible only a few years ago.—Charles A. Lindbergh in *The New York Times Magazine.*

There has been some confusion in the press as to the effect of the action of the Committee and that by finding Mr. Tilden guilty of these charges he would be declared a professional.—Statement by the United States Lawn Tennis Association, as reported in the daily press. Also, from the same: Thereupon, largely due to the agitation of Mr. Tilden and his friends, a representative committee was appointed.

Though Jesus was born more than nineteen hundred years ago, He is still the leaven of God in the human fabric.—S. Parkes Cadman in a syndicated article.

Redeeming debts for which he had become security, poverty made his old age difficult.—Joseph Hergesheimer in *The Saturday Evening Post.*

He was an Abolitionist and Methodist—both unpopular doctrines in town.—E. W. Howe in *The Saturday Evening Post.*

The nature of the periodical we gather is to be a sort of popular highbrow weekly.—Isabel M. Paterson in *Books, New York Herald-Tribune.*

Due to the higher speeds at which all motorists drive today . . . a blow-out is exceedingly dangerous.—Advertisement of the Shaler Vulcanizer.

Dunlop seeks to select its dealers with the same thoroughness it selects its raw materials.—Advertisement of Dunlop Tires.

Will anyone possessing such information living or dead, communicate with ——. An advertisement for a missing person in the New York *World* (which advertises that its department of classified advertising helps clients with their copy).

Make a high resolve today, when the wheels of industry begin to gather speed for the coming season, that you are going to step up a few rungs in the earnings ladder this autumn.—The New York *World,* advertising itself.

The result of that investigation showed that 61.2% of the families voted *The American Magazine* the *most indispensable.*—*The American Magazine,* advertising itself.

The reason for this is that I have not read them, or only in extracts.—D. B. Wyndham Lewis in his *François Villon.*

They did not move their heads, and scarcely their lips, as they spoke.—H. M. Tomlinson in his *Gallions Reach.*

I don't believe from that statement that he meant to infer he was afraid.—Colonel Milton McRae in his volume of reminiscences.

It was said, too, that why he scarcely ever went wrong, was because by his own business talent he could make a success of anything.—W. B. Maxwell in his *Spinster of this Parish.*

She recalled an occasion at Dunross when, after seeing a friend off from the front door, the friend had returned for a forgotten purse.—Margot Asquith, Countess of Oxford and Asquith, in her *Octavia.*

Such is contemporary English as it is printed in America.

If you observe it over a period of several months or years, you will notice, furthermore, that, without any noticeable decrease in the variety of solecisms in general, certain errors successively stand out from the mass and dominate it. For a month or six weeks the "due to" formula is omnipresent. The next month, in every medium you glance at, everyone is printing "The reason is because". The week of these jottings happens to fall in a stretch dedicated—if it amuses anyone to know—to the familiar construction which informs us that something-or-other belongs to a class all members of which *is* thus-and-so. The gleanings of a few minutes will exemplify:

It is one of the most important pieces of research on the subject that has been accomplished.—J. George Frederick in *The New York Herald-Tribune Magazine.*

One of the most vitally living contributions to science and to general culture which has appeared in many years.—William Beebe in *Books.*

A ten-minute frolic in the swimming pool

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before breakfast is just one of the many privileges that makes living at The Park Central delightfully different.—Advertisement.

He returned yesterday to relate one of the most amazing stories of loss of memory—amnesia—that ever has been recorded.—News item in the New York *World*.

Wilkins is one of undoubtedly less than a dozen white men in the world who knows how to build a snowhouse Eskimo fashion.—Vilhjalmur Stefansson in *The American Magazine*.

This is the start of one of the most unusual mystery stories that has yet been perpetrated.—E. P. Dutton & Co., in a small advertisement which also pays its respects to Edgar Allan Poe.

So much for the bare general fact. Any fairly literate, fairly observant person can verify it for himself in a week of spare minutes or on a rainy Sunday morning. There is no virtue in collecting illustrations beyond a handful to remind us that illustrations are plentiful everywhere, from the most aristocratic magazines down to the lowliest house organs, and from patent medicine advertisements up to books issued by the best houses. Printing ragged, unkempt, and down-at-heels English has come to be a leading industry. It accounts for an appalling fraction of the present rapid destruction of our forests.

From such data a historical grammarian might argue that the language itself, syntactically considered, is going to pieces. A formal grammarian might argue that more and more of our writing is done by illiterates. An economist might conclude that the tremendous volume of printed matter made possible by modern machinery and demanded by modern readers has rendered it impossible to supervise any of it with sufficient care. An educator might assert that the schools are making a poor job of teaching us the language of our daily use. A classicist would probably charge the symptom to the disappearance of Latin and Greek, and add "I told you so". A sociologist might discover that the nation is putting its capacity for exactitude into applied science and commerce —into anything and everything but the use of language.

There is perhaps something to be said for each of these contentions, and for others not named. No one of them has anything to do with the point of these jottings. All of them go much deeper than I wish to venture now, or in this limited space. Moreover, they have to do with the present status of the language itself—with how it is *written*. And it will be observed that I have stuck very explicitly to the fact of how the language is being *printed*. The utmost extent of my intention here is to formulate a simple mechanical explanation of why so little reasonably grammatical English is today being printed in America.

Briefly, the explanation is this: our editorial, printing, and proof-reading machinery has broken down under the strain of our mass production of reading matter. There are probably more competent editors, printers, and proof-readers than there ever were; and certainly there is a greater number of passably literate writers than ever before. But there are not so many in proportion to the work that is required to be done, the space that is to be filled, the tonnage of matter that is to be seen through the press. This has increased of late beyond anything that could have been foreseen a generation ago. Compare the thickness of this week's *Saturday Evening Post* with a number printed in 1895. Weigh a Sunday metropolitan newspaper. Cast an eye over the periodicals on a well-stocked news-stand. Stroll through a bookshop. You are likely to end by marvelling that anything resembling correct English syntax ever gets printed at all.

The fact is, no one on earth is completely grammatical. Everyone has his grammatical blind spots. The most meticulous authors of the past wrote many shabby locutions, as their hand-written letters, diaries, and original manuscripts remain to prove. The fact that they were enabled to present a neat appearance to the world is ascribable, in a greater degree than the casual reader is aware, to the painstaking work done on their text by editors, compositors, and proof-readers. The day was when most printers knew more about the rudiments of correct usage than most writers knew. Today a printer is responsible only for following copy, mistakes and all. In that former day, proof-

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readers proof-read: every proper name, every date, every allusion, every foreign phrase was subject to a detailed scrutiny and to a pertinent question if doubt remained. Today the printer's proof-reader slides a hurried eye down the column for broken type and ragged margins—if there is time. Complete literacy in printed matter was always the result of team work involving the author who wrote, the critical reader who accepted, the printer who set type, the proof-reader who gave another critical reading, and the author who in turn proof-read—with other similar processes added if there were the merest suspicion that they were needed. By that time, since one man's grammatical blind spots do not coincide exactly with another's, the resultant text was clean.

Now, time is quantity, and quantity is money. An author—that is to say, a person who does not know everything that it would be useful for him to know—writes a novel or whacks it out on his typewriter. It is neatly copied for him by a typist who certainly knows less about what he wants than he knows himself. And, as likely as not, it goes to the publisher without another reading; the author will, he tells himself, catch the worst howlers in proof. The publisher reads the first fifty pages rather carefully, looks at the end, skims over the intervening parts. When the book is designed by the publisher's manufacturing department, the first chapter is styled for purely typographic —not textual—details, and the printer is instructed to apply the typographic indications throughout and to follow copy for the text. When he gets through following it, he has (owing to the pressure upon him and to general human fallibility) introduced a good many original variations which it is the business of the proof-room to catch. The proof-room is too rushed to catch more than an occasional one of them, together with a few mechanical slips. The proofs go to the publisher, who delivers them to the author, who, being within sixteen hours of catching a liner, asks the publisher to take charge of seeing that the printer has followed the manuscript —which by that time has somehow got itself established in the author's mind as a letter-perfect, unchallengeable transcription of his original intent.

What is true of book publication is true of magazines and newspapers, except that in connection with these the corresponding processes are even more hurried and even more subject, under pressure, to omission.

Thus, from the point of the author's completion of his first draft, the whole thing gets steadily worse in every stage, instead of better. No informed person will now undertake to draw, from the mere evidence of English as it is printed, any very substantial inferences about English as it is written. Anyway, regardless of what authors write, it is the task of the mechanico-scholarly processes to protect them from the outcroppings of their own inadequacy. This is the job that is not being done. Both its mechanical and its scholarly aspects are sadly in abeyance. And we, the public, view the inevitable results in the form of bales of printed matter in which reasons are because, implications are inferences, shared things are mutual, compared things are equally as, occurrences transpire, and evident truths are apparent. Our sense of words and of constructions is slowly, inexorably, undermined. When we take up the pen ourselves, we write as we have been reading. The very quantitative weight of wretched usage compels the science of lexicography to record the monstrosities, providing technical defense for that which is palpably slipshod. The language thus goes to pieces, with everybody's help, as an engine of just expression. And that time approaches when we shall have to say of almost any printed utterance what Stephen Crane said of a cryptic remark which the Senator from Skowmulligan made to his constituents:

"By this sentence he meant whatever he meant."

In the January Bookman Mr. Follett will begin a monthly department dealing with contemporary English usage.

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THE HISTORY OF THEIR BOOKS

Booth Tarkington: A Preliminary Paper

By Arthur Bartlett Maurice

THESE little papers, to appear from time to time in the columns of THE BOOKMAN, are frankly written in imitation of Alphonse Daudet's *The History of My Books.* Daudet, late in life, was asked to contribute to a French periodical a series of sketches telling the story of how some of his novels came to be written and of the adventures and perplexities encountered in the course of writing them. He did so, and the result is delightful reading. In book form most of these sketches are to be found in the volume *Trente Ans de Paris.*

Daudet, for example, apropos of his immortal Tartarin de Tarascon, told that the name of the hero was originally "Barbarin", but had to be changed when a Tarasconese family of Barbarins threatened a lawsuit. As a serial *Tartarin de Tarascon* was an absolute failure. First it appeared in the *Petit Moniteur Universel,* a popular newspaper. There its irony was neither relished nor understood by the readers. After some ten or twelve instalments Daudet took it to the *Figaro,* where it was better understood but came in collision with other animosities. One of the directors of the paper resented the light tone in which Daudet wrote of Algeria. He could not prevent the publication of the story, but he arranged to have it broken up into intermittent fragments, dragging it out until the point was lost.

The idea of *Kings in Exile* first flashed upon Daudet when contemplating the ruins of the Tuileries at sunset. The idea of dethroned princes, exiling themselves in Paris after their downfall, taking up their quarters on the Rue de Rivoli, and, when they woke in the morning and raised the shades of their windows, discovering these ruins—such was the first vision of the tale—provided the inspiration of the first and last chapters of the book. Much arduous research work was done by Daudet in order to insure accuracy in his picture of dethroned and impoverished royalty endeavoring to keep up a semblance of pomp in a foreign land. The models for King Christian and Queen Frederica were the recently exiled King and Queen of Naples.

The Duc de Mora of *The Nabob* was obviously the Duc de Morny. The Nabob himself was actually a pathetic political figure of the Second Empire. Felicia Ruys was a composite of Sarah Bernhardt and another woman. Daudet found the idea of *Fromont Jeune et Risler Aîné* while conducting a rehearsal of one of his own plays. In the original draft of the story Risler, the hero, was an Alsatian. Daudet changed him to a Swiss in order not to introduce sentimental patriotism. The heroine, Desirée, was first a doll's dressmaker, a trade characteristic of the noisy, humming Marais, which was the setting of the scene. But in discussing the novel with one of his friends Daudet learned of Dickens's *Our Mutual Friend,* where there is the same conception of a young cripple who is a doll's dressmaker; so instead Desirée became a worker on ornaments.

Daudet told the story concretely. Literary *ana* is rich in illuminating bits throwing light upon the evolution of famous novels. Books have been written about the Dickens originals and the Thackeray originals. There is said to be in existence a complete set of the works of Guy de Maupassant in which the author wrote in the margins the real names of all the characters. Dumas found the entire plot of *The Count of Monte Cristo* and the parallel of the astonishing career of Edmond Dantes in the archives of the Paris Secret Police.

Today when a book achieves conspicuous success the story of its writing should be worth the telling. For this preliminary, explanatory paper I have selected Booth Tark-

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ington, permitting myself to range from *Cherry, The Gentleman from Indiana* and *Monsieur Beaucaire,* the successes of nearly thirty years ago, down to *The Plutocrat* and *Claire Ambler* of recent yesterday.

II

Back of nearly every story that Booth Tarkington has written there is a story. That was particularly so in the early days when he was groping to find himself, and when the neighbors were derisively asking when he would stop "fussing around with literature" and go to work. A great deal of the Booth Tarkington of those heart-breaking, formative years was reflected in the John Harkless of *The Gentleman from Indiana.* Harkless was described in the story as occupied with a realization that "there had been a man in his class whose ambition needed no restraint, his promise was so complete—in the strong belief of the University, a belief he could not help knowing—and that seven years to a day from his Commencement this man was sitting on a rail fence in Indiana". Sitting on a rail fence in Indiana was figuratively just what Booth Tarkington was doing from 1893 to 1899.

The Gentleman from Indiana is the best Tarkingtonian example of the evolution of a novel. In its very first form it was merely a two thousand word sketch called *The Better Man,* and written for a prize competition of the *Nassau Literary Magazine* of Princeton. It won the prize of $15. The sketch revolved about the circus scene that was long after incorporated in the novel, and introduced some of the minor characters of the eventual book. While still an undergraduate at Princeton Tarkington expanded *The Better Man* into a tale of forty thousand words about a young college graduate who became an editor of a paper in a country town. The early narrative came to an abrupt end when the hero was in the middle of a walk; the author was unable to carry him a step farther. Then one day, years later, the solution was found and *The Gentleman from Indiana* written.

Cherry was Booth Tarkington's first accepted tale. There are two distinct stories connected with it: one having to do with its inception and the other with its publication. The original idea came from reading a letter addressed to the editor of an "Advice" column. It was the letter of a pedantic, priggish and smug young man who complained of not being properly appreciated by young persons of the opposite sex. The writing became simply a matter of building up that young man and transporting him back to an environment of the eighteenth century. The story was accepted as a two part serial by *Harper's Magazine.* Undoubtedly the acceptance was once regarded as an error of judgment, for it was apparently laid aside and forgotten for some years. When discovered and eventually published, *Cherry* had a greatly augmented value as a result of the celebrity its author had acquired in the meantime.

Monsieur Beaucaire grew out of a dream and certain sketches made at a time when Booth Tarkington was still undecided whether he was better fitted to be an artist or a writer. He had made some pictures for a little magazine that failed and he had a few sketches left over. One of these he picked up one night from his desk. It represented a little man in a peruke, sitting disconsolately at a table, while in front of him stood a big, tall man who was obviously intended to be English. The little man looked like a Frenchman. That sketch was the nucleus of the first draft of *Monsieur Beaucaire.* Incidentally, after the story had met with repeated rejection, Tarkington sent it out once again accompanied by the drawings, in the hope that they might be of some help in winning a favorable decision.

The suggestion for *The Beautiful Lady* came in the life and on the spot. As Mr. Tarkington afterward described it: "I was in Paris, and saw a crowd, one afternoon, on the pavement in front of the Café de la Paix, all laughing; everybody up and down the Boulevard was laughing. The American bar around the corner was doing no business, patrons had emerged to stare. I worked through the crowd and saw my fellow, the man with the painted head (the first title was 'The Man With the Painted Head').

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He was a nice-looking person, exceedingly well dressed, and immensely unhappy. Afterwards he haunted me. What could have induced a man of his type to do such a thing? Then the story came".

The Beautiful Lady, His Own People, and *The Guest of Quesnay* all grew out of various experiences and impressions of Booth Tarkington's long period of residence in Paris and Italy. The balloon ascension of *The Beautiful Lady* was written from somewhat agitated memories of a highly precarious personal ballooning adventure. In those days, when the airplane was still in the experimental stage, it was the fashion to dine in a captive balloon at a height of two or three thousand feet. The Tarkington party were thus engaged when the balloon broke from its moorings. It was a bad *quart d'heure,* later to be turned into amusing copy.

As the foundation of *His Own People* Mr. Tarkington unwittingly took an old story, based upon a moral pertinent to all countries and all ages: the danger of too implicit trust in strangers. At the time he wrote it he had never read Thackeray's *A Caution to Travellers,* now incorporated in the *Paris Sketch Book.* But though plot and characters of *His Own People* closely paralleled plot and characters of *A Caution to Travellers,* the adventurers of the Tarkington story were all drawn from the author's own observation. For example, there was the Honorable Chanler Pedlow, who, according to his own version, had instructed Governor McKinley how to run for the Presidency. Tarkington had bought in Paris a motor car that he described as an "idle, roaring Fiat". Incidentally, every one of Tarkington's motor cars, from the primitive contrivance that excited the derision of George Amberson Minafer in *The Magnificent Ambersons,* down to the capable giants that carried the triumphant Tinker of *The Plutocrat* to the summits of the Atlas, has had a distinct individuality. The "idle, roaring Fiat" was conspicuously misbehaving one day when the original of the Honorable Chanler approached to claim previous ownership of the car. "My pet. My own little pet," he said unctuously. "Then," said Tarkington, "I knew I had been stung."

But to come down to the Booth Tarkington of today or very recent yesterday, the Booth Tarkington of *The Plutocrat* and of *Claire Ambler*: the Tarkingtonian gallery of feminine portraits is a long one, but no figure in it stands out more clearly than Claire Ambler. Viewed from one angle she might be called "Daisy Miller's grand-daughter". What Henry James did for the American girl of the late 1870's or early 1880's against the European background, Mr. Tarkington has done for her highly sophisticated descendant of the 1920's. There is in Claire a reminiscence of earlier heroines; something *of the beauté du diable* of Cora Madison of *The Flirt,* but behind Claire in the writing there was the picture of a very definite, very charming and very capricious young woman. The Italian setting of the middle and most important part of the story is called Raona. The actual Raona was not in Italy at all. It was Taormina in Sicily. The crippled Englishman, Charles Orbison, the first man really to stir Claire's heart, was suggested, not by an Englishman, but by a French *mutilé* who held himself proudly aloof both from allies and enemies of the world war.

Then Tinker, of *The Plutocrat,* the great Goth, the Roman conqueror—whose triumphant march showed that the ideals of the United States, and of the Mid-West in particular, had been the ideals that had moved the great builders of all ages. He was probably the most widely discussed character of American fiction of his year. Was there a Tinker? Was he typical? For years Tinker had been in a process of evolution. He first appeared as the Sheridan of *The Turmoil,* the father of Bibbs. But he was not Tinker, not the character for whom the author was groping. Then, two or three years ago, Mr. Tarkington made an extended trip through the Mediterranean. The travellers were a party of four. The result of that journey was not to discover Tinker, but to find to his amazement that he had taken Tinker, or that what was needed to round out Tinker was travelling with him. One day his travelling companion succeeded in something that Mr. Tarkington had attempted in vain. "Well, it worked, didn't it?" was his derisive comment. Then and there Earl Tinker was born.

The dedication of *Claire Ambler,* which

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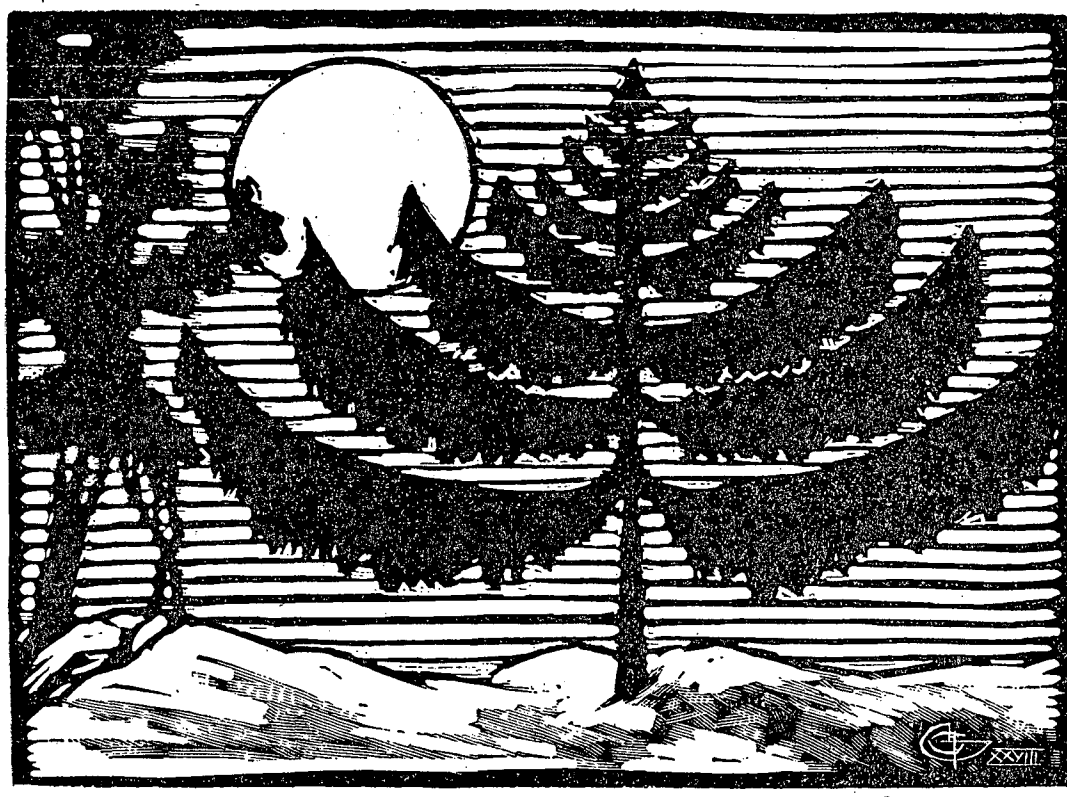
followed *The Plutocrat,* is "To J. N. F. and H. S. F." In that dedication lies the story of *The Plutocrat,* for "H. S. F.", though blessed with a ripe cultivation and a knowledge of the amenities of civilized life that the breezy Mid-Westerner entirely lacked, was substantially Tinker. Or, to use Mr. Tarkington's own words, "I wrenched Tinker out of a fragment of him". Regarding the dedication Mr. Tarkington says: *"Claire Ambler* is dedicated to ——— and his wife out of a gratitude that is in part concealed from them, though I got nothing of 'Mrs. Tinker' from Mrs. ———. To her ——— is as astonishing as he is to me. I mustn't forget to tell you of his long successful masquerade with her, nor of his bitterness for the Sicilian Capitana, nor of old Cap'n Dudley's impression of him. 'Learned character, ain't he?' the Cap'n inquired, and Mrs. ———, when I told her, became hysterical".

Mr. Tarkington's enthusiasm for the original Tinker has not waned. To quote at length from a letter on the subject: "Probably you'd have to be discreet about *The Plutocrat,* since indiscretion might too much involve a classmate of yours who lives across the street from me here, and was a great pleasure to me in Africa and Sicily. . . . If I'd known at Princeton what that curly-haired, girl-faced youth would some day mean to me I'd have thought wizardry at work. Every month he is more amazing; and until we landed in Algiers I never even suspected him of being surprising. He's not like Tinker at all—he's infinitely more interesting—but I wrenched 'Tinker' out of a fragment of him".



H. GlintenKamp

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RICHMOND AND ITS WRITERS

By Eudora Ramsay Richardson

RICHMOND has no particular distaste for celebrities, of course; it simply can't be bothered. Unless our writers contribute to the daily newspapers, to a trade magazine published monthly in Richmond to promote a real estate development, or write in such a way as to offend our loyalty to traditions, Richmond is barely conscious of their existence. Hoi polloi knows vaguely that there is a man by the name of James Branch Cabell, but they do not read his books. As long as Mary Johnston and Ellen Glasgow stuck to historical topics they received local commendation; but Richmond can not sanction realism, satire, and metaphysics. That writers should be detached from the life about them in order to do their work is wholly inexplicable to the proletariat. Margaret Prescott Montague is about as unknown to the rank and file of Richmond's population as she is in the Fiji Islands. Two or three novelists who write in mildly humorous or sentimental vein and who have been generous in the matter of author's readings given before clubs enjoy a popularity attributable in part to the charm of their personalities.

Mr. Cabell, however, remains a perpetual enigma to Richmond—one which the author himself certainly makes no effort to help his neighbors solve. Since the day that he discovered *The Rivet in Grandfather's Neck* and the friends of his too, too solid family discovered certain well known characters and situations, Richmond has not known just what to do about James Branch Cabell. *Jurgen* aggravated a state of affairs that was already bad enough. When the book was temporarily banned Mr. Cabell's local audience was quickly increased. Some got none of the symbolism; some got the symbolism and nothing else. Both groups are still wondering what *Jurgen* was all about. So they have not read the books that have followed.

On one of the rare occasions when Mrs. Cabell succeeded in appearing at a tea with her husband, a well-meaning woman in an effort to make conversation remarked pleasantly that every one was discussing *Something About Eve.*

"People must do a great deal of borrowing," Mr. Cabell remarked laconically.

He was probably right. Yet people do not always read what they borrow or buy. There is a small cult in Richmond, eligibility to which depends upon professed adoration of James Branch Cabell. From one of its members I borrowed *The Silver Stallion.* It was a marvellous thing, Mr. Cabell's admirer told me, as she placed her copy in my hand. I must read it at once. I did—but it was necessary first to cut the pages.

The Women's Club, with its thousand members, is still largely representative of old Richmond, despite its younger acquisitions of recent years. Here may be seen plumed hats set upon the apex of coiffures that crystallized in the days of "rats" and pompadours. The Women's Club has always found Mr. Cabell a bit trying. His books, of course, are not discussed at the monthly literary luncheons. Mrs. Cabell presented the club library with a complete set of Mr. Cabell's works beautifully inscribed in the author's meticulous hand. The books remain in excellent condition. Several years ago Carl Van Doren, speaking before the club on "The Revolt from Dullness", acclaimed *Jurgen* the greatest American novel by a contemporary and waited for the applause. At first the stillness was unbearable. Then applause trickled through the auditorium like sleet upon trees in January. Mr. Cabell, a guest for the afternoon, sat in the front row. The back of his neck grew very red. The audience had not meant to be rude or unappreciative of the honor conferred upon its city. They just couldn't be certain that it was proper to applaud a book that surely was not nice or it wouldn't have been banned.

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Whether Mr. Cabell's shyness is caused by Richmond's lack of appreciation of his contribution to letters will probably always remain indeterminable. Richmond sees and hears him about as often as Rome sees and hears the Pope. Indeed he seems as unapproachable as the Kaiser at Doorn. I lie awake at night trying to think of clever things to say the next time I pass him in the city library. Then when I do see him standing before a book-shelf, I am as awed as I could be if Shakespeare had risen from the dead. So I say, "How do you do, Mr. Cabell?" and he says, "How do you do?" very politely, and I pretend that I came to the library merely to find a book.

As a matter of fact, those who know James Branch Cabell well declare that he is genuinely shy and not aloof because he recognizes the chasm that exists between genius and the mentality of ordinary mortals. The mere mention of his name before an audience in which he is endeavoring to be an obscure member causes that ready blush to run from the roots of his hair to the lowest point of visibility beneath his collar.

The Virginia Writers' Club was organized about the idea of Mr. Cabell as its president. (Whatever may be said of the general public's complacence regarding Mr. Cabell's genius, those persons in Richmond who labor under the delusion that they are writers bear toward him a worshipful attitude comparable to the Athenians' adoration of their goddess.) As a youngster aspiring to write, I was allowed to pour tea for the committee of four that met about ten years ago to acquaint Mr. Cabell with the honor he was about to confer upon the Muses' suppliants. Genuinely anxious to be helpful and accommodating, Mr. Cabell accepted the presidency. I have not access to the record, if there be one, of the number of times he presided at meetings. Certainly, however, it was not often. As soon as the club was successfully launched, he handed the reins to another and retired to the peace of Dumbarton, which to him was infinitely more to be desired than publicity. Now he attends the club rarely—and then on condition that he will not be called upon to speak. A banquet four years ago given in honor of visiting writers who were attending a book fair in Richmond was the occasion, I think, of his most recent appearance at The Writers' Club. Then he chose a seat conveniently near an exit. When the speaking began, for a reason known to him and perhaps successfully guessed by the rest of us, he drew a chair into the hall and sat behind an open door, from which vantage point he could see and not be seen.

By and large, Richmond treats Mr. Cabell according to his desires. There are, however, a few admirers who annoy him now and then. A group of these met one Sunday afternoon to work on the anagrams that make *Something About Eve* a sport that rivals crossword puzzles. When Caer Omn, Doonham, Dersam, Lytreia, Turoine, and Mispec Moor had been satisfactorily solved, and Tenjo, the Sylan, and a few others still baffled, a brave young woman whose name is Flannagan was delegated to call Mr. Cabell and find out whether or not any of the anagrams were based on foreign words. Giving her name as Ann Flagan, she played the anagrammatist's own game and secured the information that all the anagrams were of English origin.

The peace of Sunday afternoons, moreover, seems to be disturbed frequently by relatives who come to call, utterly oblivious that the author spends Sundays pasting clippings into a scrap book. Of course, they can't be expected to recognize genius of their own flesh and blood. According to Mrs. Cabell, James has grown quite accustomed to the attitude of his kith and kin, to whom he will perhaps never be a celebrity. A near cousin, returning from New York some time ago, is said to have telephoned Mrs. Cabell agog with excitement because she had seen something about James in a New York paper. Instead of being the least irritated that members of his family had not yet discovered that his fame had spread abroad, Mr. Cabell was intensely amused.

Ellen Glasgow, like James Branch Cabell, has roots that go deep into Virginian soil. Richmond is as proud of her, perhaps, as Richmond can be of anyone, but it has never been able to understand her motive. Her early, though entirely inoffensive, advocacy of woman-suffrage was most distressing to

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the conservative ladies who organized the socially select group known as the Association Opposed to Woman Suffrage. That one so wholly Virginian and so indisputably well born should combine such heterodoxy with realistic treatment of her state was indeed deplorable. It has been passing strange to the group she inherited that Ellen Glasgow should write not only of aristocratic Virginia to which she belongs but also of the plain people whom she has no right to understand so well. When she declared that it made no difference to her "if a man has stepped out of the gutter so long as he has stepped out", old Richmond was astounded. Why choose a character like "The Miller of Old Church" who came from a family of poor whites? How amazing to depict a governor of Virginia who was born in a circus tent! The idea of offending Virginian sensibilities by permitting Gabriella to marry the unlettered Irishman, Ben O'Hara, when a Virginian gentleman had loved her all her life! Virginians were content with the frame of mind induced by what Miss Glasgow chose to call their "evasive idealism". They did not want the picture marred by a touch of realism. So the reason for writing *Barren Ground* has never been advanced to the satisfaction of old Richmond. Perhaps the book is an epic of the soil. Yet why talk about fields that are covered with broom sedge when there are still lovely old gardens of patterned boxwood where delicate spirits hold tryst beneath rose trellises?

Distress in Richmond, however, attained its climax with the publication of *The Romantic Comedians*. How indelicate to probe beneath a Virginian gentleman's delightful exterior! It is not pleasant to be told that charming ladies like Amanda Lightfoot have all their lives been merely crystallizations of some man's ideal and never themselves. If passion is really projected into the sixties, how much better not to recognize its indecent longevity! Those dreams of Judge Honeywell's, that scene in which the Judge finds himself attracted to the French maid, the one in which he longs to touch the satiny smoothness of the mulatto girl's arm—Ugh! What possessed Ellen Glasgow to write of things like that? That the critics were unanimous in their praise of the delicious bit of satire was small comfort to Richmond. There are still subjects that nice people should not discuss. *The Romantic Comedians* really hurt the conservatives in Richmond—and Richmond, you know, is made up preponderantly of conservatives. "Why did she do it?" they wailed. "Just why did she do it?"

Miss Glasgow, however, in her charming old home, furnished out of a past whose soul she understands and whose good things she loves, gathers about her the people she enjoys and leads her full and interesting life quite aloof from that part of Richmond that might distract her from her work.

If Richmond has been mildly distressed because Ellen Glasgow's talent has been turned to a realism it prefers to evade, it has been horrified by other books from the pens of writers who belong to Richmond either by birth or later exposure to the city's traditions. The people in Richmond who read at all did not miss Emily Clarke's *Stuffed Peacocks*. One conservative went so far as to declare the book "delicious though malicious". Others were forced to recognize the fact that Miss Clarke writes with fine sophistication and that her book possesses the rare charm of freshness. There were naturally many who enjoyed the easily detected characterizations of their fellow citizens. Yet Richmond did not altogether enjoy seeing its foibles laid bare in Emily Clarke's admirable first chapter.

Indeed Richmond has had so much flattery that it will not accept criticism with any degree of grace. When Dr. Broaddus Mitchell, whom every one remembers as one of the little Mitchell boys who used to play about the Richmond College Campus, came down from Johns Hopkins recently to tell us that the southern culture we boasted had never been, that the South was facing dangerous industrialism, and that the church we had set up was wholly inadequate, there was considerable sentiment throughout Richmond for tarring and feathering the young heretic and passing a law that would keep all such apostles of truth out of the state forever.

Frances Newman's *The Hardboiled Virgin* was quite too much for Richmond's Victorian delicacy and refinement. It was a comfort,

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of course, to lay the blame for the author's birth and upbringing upon the rival city of Atlanta. Yet Miss Newman, with a sister in Richmond, had been a frequent visitor here. It did seem that Richmond should have been able to exert some influence for good to counteract the evil effect of Atlanta. There were many people in Richmond with a taste for vicarious emotions who read the book, expecting to get a thrill first and then to denounce the piece as untrue. Absence of action and conversation, coupled with Miss Newman's gift for oblique expression and her too evident erudition, prevented most of these from finishing the book. Disappointment served to add bitterness to their subsequent denouncement of *The Hardboiled Virgin.* One dear old lady, finding that her niece had been reading the book, transferred it from table to fire with the aid of tongs. Nineteenth century novelists had created the heroine Richmond preferred to see continued in fiction. Again it was "evasive idealism" to the rescue. Richmond would not have a virgin as Miss Newman had depicted hers. Therefore virgins are simply not that way. The genius of the "opulently gifted" young writer was neither excuse nor justification for the writing of truth.

Wholly satisfying to Richmond are two writers who have written nothing to offend. In the first place, who would not adore Kate Langley Bosher and Emma Speed Sampson, whether they happened to be writers or just people? Mrs. Bosher's sweet little stories about *Mary Carey, Miss Gibbie Galt, The Man From Lonely Land,* Richmond found delightful. Mrs. Sampson, having set out definitely in her sequels to *Miss Minerva and William Green Hill* to entertain children and adults who enjoy being children now and then, has kept close to her purpose, with the result that Richmond finds her books as charming as every one finds Mrs. Sampson.

Most of the other writers in Richmond, who are content to produce stories and articles of a sort, with ambitions that do not extend to the proportions of books, are fairly well related to life in Richmond. We used to think that appearing in print would make us locally conspicuous. Now, however, we have recovered from that delusion. We have found out to the comfort of our social qualities and the discomfort of our vanity that we can characterize our friends and enemies in fact and fiction without running the risk of being caught. A regular contributor is quite used to having his friends stumble upon something he has written and voice their amazement that he writes.

So we have had to organize in Richmond two groups of writers with special functions —The Virginia Writers' Club and The Student-Writer Club. Almost all the student writers are Virginia writers, but all the Virginia writers are not student writers—a statement to which the "finished products" will no doubt give due emphasis. The Virginia Writers' Club conducts a nineteenth century debating society, at which nothing so vulgar as sales is ever discussed. Our papers are prepared in such a way as to avoid any possibility of their seeing the light of print. The season now closing has featured biography with such innocuous subjects as old Sir John Randolph, the uncle of the gentleman from Roanoke of the same name, a knight who died so long ago as to be quite out of the reach of Rupert Hughes and his cohorts, our grandfathers whose sole claim to distinction consists in having been our progenitors, and ourselves, of deep and unending interest to the autobiographers. As far as my knowledge extends, only one public reference has been made to any member's published work. The readily explained exception occurred when the daughter of a member read before the club her mother's contribution to the trade journal that affords so excellent a market for Virginia writers. The story gave an edifying account of Christmas as celebrated on the author's ancestral plantation.

The most vociferous members of The Virginia Writers' Club profess to be interested in art for art's sake. Sales are of the earth, earthy. One old lady, who has since passed on to whatever reward there is for a life of consecration to art and repudiation of riches, said once before the club, her voice a-tremble with earnestness, "I am a failure, and I thank God I am a failure. At least I have never stooped to commercialize my art". There are others in the club who have never stooped. Surely for these, too, along with

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the golden harp and other celestial appurtenances there will be many stars in a golden crown. For several members, moreover, the club functions in an in-memoriam capacity. Indeed there is a rumor that they wrote, once, before the lamented demise of *Lippincott's Magazine*.

The Student-Writers' Club was organized to promote sales. Now that sales are being achieved by its members with encouraging regularity, the group holds together chiefly because it provides a local audience. Half the joy in selling, of course, comes from telling some appreciative souls about the sales. Alas! In Richmond's social circles one does not dare mention writing and run the risk of being thought queer. Among the frequent revelations of the disrepute writers enjoy was a remark made recently concerning a contributor to the popular magazines who was a guest in Richmond.

"Why, she's really pretty and attractive," said a little woman in amazement. "I was never so surprised in my life; people like that are usually funny-looking, you know."

So, when we land a good market and are in danger of bursting, The Student-Writers' Club is an excellent safety valve. At each meeting an enthusiastic demonstration is staged for the member who has just made a sale. Perhaps Mr. Cabell, Miss Glasgow, Miss Montague, Mrs. Sampson, and Mrs. Bosher can exist in the larger sphere they have created. The struggling writers, however, with souls more gregarious than artistic, must flock with a few birds of their feather.

The situation in Richmond, moreover, is not without its hopeful aspects. Recently the Chamber of Commerce has begun to include neglected celebrities among those assets worth advertising. Since the promoters of business cannot be expected to read the literature produced at home, they boost indiscriminately those writers that defame the fair city and those that extol its charms. With the arrival of the boom, for which elaborate preparations are now being made, perhaps Richmond will cease to take its celebrities calmly.

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Sights and Sounds

CLASSICAL AND MODERN

By Ernest Boyd

THE Civic Repertory Theatre opened its third season with Molière's *Bourgeois Gentilhomme*. The version used was that of F. Anstey, "The Would-Be Gentleman", which was done in London a couple of years ago by Nigel Playfair at the Lyric Theatre, Hammersmith, to the apparent satisfaction of English audiences. Those who are supporting Miss Le Gallienne in her attempt to provide uncommercial repertory also welcomed the play, which survives very well the adaptation made by the now venerable Mr. Anstey, whose "Vice Versa" and "The Tinted Venus" once beguiled the leisure of at least two generations of readers.

Under Miss Le Gallienne's direction Molière was treated very much as Farquhar was a few months ago in the Players' Club production which I noticed here. That is, instead of playing it heavily in the manner of classical comedy, the Civic Repertory company offered us a light farce, in which such comic values as the play still retains, it seemed to me, emerged as brightly as ever. Having seen Lady Gregory turn Molière into excellent Irish folk comedy at the Abbey Theatre in Dublin, I was glad that he had been approached in New York with a like disregard for orthodoxy. Miss Morris, alas, had no conception of the rôle of Dorimène, but Egon Brecher as Jourdain gave a first class performance. One inevitably compares all Jourdains of our day to Coquelin, and Mr. Brecher stands the comparison better, by all accounts, than did Nigel Playfair. He had the labored gestures, the good-humored stupidity, the innocent, credulous grimaces, the diffident conceit which are an essential part of Jordain as Coquelin taught us to know him.

A great classic was likewise chosen by the Theatre Guild to open their season, to wit, Goethe's "Faust", in the translation of Graham and Tristam Rawson, under the direction of Frederick Holl, a German director, who was assisted in his labors by a bodyguard of interpreters. Not being a director, I do not know whether it is possible to direct a play when one cannot understand what the actors are saying or, consequently, appreciate the exact values of the direction and the spoken word in an unfamiliar medium. Judging by the Guild's production of "Faust", I should say that it is not possible, otherwise Herr Holl would probably have died of psychic trauma, had he known what was happening to his beloved Goethe. Even those who had not been brought up on the original were unanimous in declaring that something had gone radically wrong with "Faust" in this transplanting.

We are accustomed to smile at the naïve ambition which prompts amateurs to undertake ambitious productions demanding all the resources of money and talent, but from the Theatre Guild the American public has been taught to expect better things—better, that is to say, than anything of which the "mere Broadway" producer is capable. Yet here is a play, one of the great masterpieces of the world—not a masterpiece for schoolmasters and pedants, but a living, vital and beautiful thing—which is played in Germany as often and as successfully as Shakespeare, and with the same gusto as Bernard Shaw. In fact, to get in English anything of its flavor, one must be alternately tickled by wit that is Shavian and lulled by poetry that is Shakespearean. Obviously, one does not offer such a work to the first hack to translate, nor does one accept a translation without bearing in mind all that is required of it, if "Faust" is to be given in English in the manner in which Shakespeare is given in German. That is the

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standard, I think, which the Theatre Guild is supposed to represent. Mae West might get an adaptation from Samuel Shipman or Willard Mack.

The Messrs. Rawson, who are described as English actors—and very good actors they may be—are not the first to translate or adapt "Faust", but they are credited with having made a literal translation, which is presumably the reason why they were preferred to their numerous predecessors, including the far from negligeable Bayard Taylor. What they have given us, however, is so far from being literal (which would in itself have been an outrage), that it omits passages which create a vacuum very much like that which would be felt if one heard "The Merchant of Venice" without Portia's speech, or "Hamlet" without the soliloquy. In other words, the omissions are not obscure or subtle, but are those which a ten year old child has learned to know and admire at school.

Literal the translation is, in all conscience, if by literal one understands the complete disappearance of every line of poetry and every spark of wit and genius. Messrs. Rawson, undoubtedly, are not to be blamed, since there is no reason to suppose that they have ever indicated that they possessed the qualifications of the translator of genius who would be required to do justice to Goethe's "Faust". But one would naturally like to know why this pedestrian version is deemed superior in any way to the melodramatic tosh with which Sir Henry Irving used to thrill the housemaids in my childhood. Sir Henry, at least, was frankly the ham actor raised to the *n*th power, and he got the kind of "Faust" he was looking for. It cannot be said that the same is true of the subscribers to the Theatre Guild.

Aside from the translation, the production was further handicapped by the fact that there were seventeen scenes, after almost every one of which the curtain was lowered and the lights went up, thereby destroying the mood and the tempo. With the exception of Dudley Digges, whose Mephistopheles alone made the evening endurable, nobody seemed to have any other idea of speaking the lines than to give as exact an imitation as possible of the reverend pastor. Miss Helen Westley as Martha was a highly amusing Helen Westley, and George Gaul gave a Faust which suffered by reason of the flat lines which ruined the best speeches and by his apparent lack of training in the speaking of verse. The Voice sounded as if it came from the throat of that deity whom the late Wilhelm II used to call *Unser Gott*, so strangely thick and Teutonic was its accent. Miss Helen Chandler looked the part of Margaret, but Goethe put more into Margaret than meets the eye, very little of which survived in the lines given to Miss Chandler.

As it will survive recent onslaughts in THE BOOKMAN, so Jim Tully's reputation will, I suppose, survive the dramatization of "Jarnegan", by Charles Beahan and Garrett Fort, through which Richard Bennett roystered his way amidst much gin and profanity. As in "Elmer Gantry", so in "Jarnegan", the weaknesses of the original stand out because of the necessary over-emphasis of the stage. Mr. Tully, it has always seemed to me, is a highly imaginative melodramatist, whose realism is just sufficient to give an air of truth to a wholly unconvincing, if highly entertaining narrative. All of that is visible in "Jarnegan", and makes up the defects as well as the qualities of the play, which will be chiefly remembered, I fancy, because of the emergence of a still fairer daughter, Joan Bennett, of whom her parent seemed not unjustifiably proud.

I will refrain from beginning this paragraph by saying: "some of my best friends are Jews", since that is, I am told, to add insult to injury. I will merely say that when "The Dybbuk" was delighting Jew and Gentile alike at the Neighborhood Playhouse, my blood was frozen by the horror and ugliness of the manners and customs which it portrayed, and I thought it would be the most marvelous piece of anti-Semitic propaganda ever devised, for nothing ever surpassed its emphasis upon the least endearing characteristics of that people. The memory of the play came back to me as I watched George Jessel in "The War Song".

The play shows a young Jewish song plugger who manages to avoid the draft, is finally sent to the front, turns out to be an amusing

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weakling and a dreadful soldier, and is finally left sobbing hysterically in a German prisoners' camp as he murmurs the Jewish prayer for the dead. There is a good deal of simple human comedy in the play, and even the pathos, though excessive, is natural. What puzzled my Nordic blond mind was how such a figure could be received as sympathetically as Mr. Jessel was received by an audience which was very largely composed of that race which chills the spine of MM. Lothrop Stoddard and Madison Grant, and other connoisseurs of dolichocephalic civilization. Here was neither the doctrinaire pacifism of the Anglo-Saxon war martyrs, nor the cheerful courage of the average man caught in the war machine: just the tears of self-pity, such as once used to be greeted by small boys with: "Cry-baby!" and "Mamma's pet!"

In "Little Accident", Floyd Dell's novel, *An Unmarried Father,* became with the assistance of Thomas Mitchell a diverting farce, in which Mr. Mitchell and Miss Katherine Alexander acquitted themselves most satisfactorily.

Musical shows flourish on every hand and even offer a certain choice of entertainment. Standardized merchandise are: "Cross My Heart", in which the main attractions are Miss Mary Lawlor and Miss Doris Eaton, who look, sing and dance well, and are responsible for "Right Out of Heaven", "Dream Sweetheart" and "Lady Whippoorwill"; "Just a Minute", which is saved from dreariness only by the antics of Arthur and Morton Havel; "Billie", a musical version of "Broadway Jones", with Polly Walker to invest it with all the necessary charm, Val and Ernie Stanton all the necessary humor, and Mr. Cohan himself to supply such lyrics and music as "Where Were You?" "Happy" and "Billie". Of all possible funny telephone scenes in the theatre none has ever amused me more than that of the second act when the two Stantons get a wrong number.

All of these shows are good enough entertainment, "Billie" being the best of the three. They lack, however, the distinction of "The New Moon", with which Messrs. Schwab and Mandel duplicate the success of "Good News", surely one of the greatest musical comedy hits of late, and offer an operetta comparable to "The Desert Song", but better, I think. As I sagaciously insinuated in this place some months ago, musical shows are more competently and understandingly produced, as a rule, than the average play. "The New Moon", for example, was tried out last season and taken off because nobody could be found to take the part now so beautifully played by Miss Evelyn Herbert. Meanwhile, changes were made in the libretto and score. The result is a melodious and delightful evening, picturesque settings, fine choruses, such as "Stouthearted Men", and songs like "One Kiss" and "Lover Come Back to Me", and not a note of syncopation in the lot.

A more ambitious effort of the same kind is "Chee-Chee", by Fields, Rodgers and Hart, equally skilled in such enterprises, but not so successful this time, despite a book based on Charles Petit's amusing novel, *The Son of the Grand Eunuch.* What aimed at being a species of "Mikado" turned out to be a rather unamusing show, whose songs, if innocent of jazz, are no better than those in "Just a Minute". Miss Helen Ford and Miss Betty Starbuck did their best with material which, somehow, seems to have been wasted.

Martin Brown's "musicomedy", briefly called "Paris", is a pretext to enable Miss Irene Bordoni to wear those enormous feathers which have been esteemed beautiful in Paris vaudeville for the past thirty years and to sing very badly Cole Porter's "Babes in the Wood", "Don't Look at Me That Way" and "Let's Fall in Love". These, fortunately, were also played and sung by Irving Aaronson's Commanders, likewise "The Land of Going to Be", a tuneful number by Ray Goetz and Walter Kollo. Everybody laughed when Miss Bordoni spoke French rapidly, but as the audience also appreciated to the full the real comedy of Louise Closser Hale and Arthur Margetson, one had to smile at the prestige of a French accent and enjoy what is, on the whole, a pleasant variation on the usual musical comedy.

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"BALLADS, SONGS AND SNATCHES"

By Abbe Niles

IT is now Christmas, and not a cup of drink must pass without a carol; the beasts, fowl and fish come to a general execution, and the corn is ground to dust for the bakehouse and the pastry; cards and dice purge many a purse, and the youth show their agility in shoeing of the wild mare; now good cheer and welcome, and God be with you—and against the New Year provide for the presents — the Lord of Misrule is no mean man for his time, and the guests of the high table must lack no wine; the lusty bloods must look about them like men, and piping and dancing puts away much melancholy, stolen venison is sweet, and a fat coney is worth money, pitfalls are now set for small birds, and a woodcock hangs himself in a gin, a good fire heats all the house, and a full alms-basket makes the beggar's prayers; the maskers and the mummers make the merry sport, but if they lose their money their drum goes dead; swearers and swaggerers are sent away to the alehouse, and unruly wenches are in danger of judgement; musicians now make their instruments speak out, and a good song is worth the hearing. In brief, I thus conclude it: I hold it a memory of the Heaven's love and the world's peace, the mirth of the honest, and the meeting of the friendly. Farewell.

(Nicholas Breton, *Fantasticks*, 1626.)

A good song still is worth the hearing. But of those we know that have a Christmas flavor, none save a few religious carols and a very few Negro spirituals are American, while Breton himself when he wrote may well have had in mind most of the now familiar English songs of pure Christmas cheer. As a living organism, the merry Christmas perished under Puritanism. It has come down to us piecemeal, by inheritance from Dutchman and Cavalier; in some families, in a few places such as Hoosac School, it has the taste of survival rather than mere conscious reconstruction; but elsewhere it is put on like a fancy-dress costume. What has this country contributed to it? A turkey dinner; and in the South, Chinese crackers and the greedy salutation "Christmas Gift!" Self-consciousness has it, and from under that blight no songs spring.

* * *

As there are no fine old American Christmas catches which I might dig up and print this month, I turn instead to a volume, illustrated with curious wood engravings, for something you are not likely to know in early minstrel songs. The book is *Songs for the People*, edited by Albert G. Emerick, Philadelphia, 1849, and the song is:

BEST SELLERS IN POPULAR MUSIC

The following list as of November 13th, in order of popularity, is furnished by a leading New York jobber. ("W" indicates waltzes.)

Sonny Boy
Jeannine (W)
Memories of France (W)
My Angel
Chiquita (W)
I Can't Give You Anything But Love
King for a Day (W)
My Blackbirds Are Bluebirds Now
Neapolitan Nights (W)

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OLE GRAY GOOSE *

Monday was my wedding-day,
Tuesday I got married,
Wen'sday night my wife lay sick,
Sunday she was buried.

Oh! looky dar! Oh! looky whar?
Look right ober yander!
Don't you see de Old Gray Goose
Smiling at de gander?

Wen'sdy night my wife took sick,
Despair ob death cum o'er her;
Oh! some did cry; but I did laff
To see dat death go from her. (Chorus)

I ask Miss Dinah Rose, one day,
In de ole cart to ride;
She war, by gosh, so berry fat,
I couldn't sit beside her. (Chorus)

When she was gittin out de cart,
Miss Dinah lose her shoe,
And den I spied a great, big hole
Right in her stocking through. (Chorus)

Says I to her, "You Dinah gal,
Only looky dar—
Dem heels are sticking out too far,
As a nigger, I declar." (Chorus)

Says she to me, "You nigger Jo,
What are you about?
Dere's science in dem 'ere heels,
And I want 'em to stick out." (Chorus)

* * *

New Phonograph Records Generally. *Hot or eccentric jazz:* first honors to Frankie Trumbauer's (*Okeh*), playing "Bless You, Sister!" (both a dance and a salty picture of a colored revival meeting) and "Dusky Stevedore". But I warn you that the latter describes the stevedore as *"Happy, 'cause he's handlin' freight!"* I like the reckless piano and clarinet, the trick effects and the dialect in "Sugar Foot Strut" and "A Monday Date" (*Ok*), played by Louis Armstrong's Hot 5. Hear also the smart versions of "Nagasaki" and "When Sweet Susie Goes Stepping By" by the 6 Jumping Jacks (*Brunswick*), and of "Butternut" and "The Night We Did the Boom-Boom by the Sea" by the Sugar Babies (*Ok*); and try Red Nichols's conceptions of "The Original Dixieland One-Step" and of Fud Livingston's rueful "Imagination" (*Br.*). *Polite foxtrots:* All-Star Orchestra in "She Didn't Say Yes" and "There's a Rainbow Round My Shoulder" (*Victor*), which last good tune is also sung, with "Sonny Boy", by Al Jolson (*Br.*). The "Rainbow" title is borrowed from that of a Negro novel or saga by Prof. Odum of North Carolina University; and Dr. Odum borrowed it from a Negro folksong, reprinted with two tunes in "Negro Workaday Songs". But to get back to sweet jazz, there's dancing to be done to Whiteman's record "Blue Night" and "Roses of Yesterday" (*Columbia*); to "How About It" and "One-Step to Heaven" as played by the new orchestra of Henri Busse (*Vic.*), who was Whiteman's veteran trumpeter and concert master; and to "My First Love" and "Two Lips" as torn off by Fred Rich. *Waltzes:* for dancing purposes these are perfect: "In the Good Old Summertime" and "Sidewalks of New York", by Whiteman's (*Col.*), and "Sweet Mystery of Life" with "Kiss Me Again", by Green's Marimba Band (*Ok*); but oh, listen, if you don't dance, to the "Dollar Princess" waltzes and "Your Dance is a Love Memory", recorded in Vienna by Dajos Bela's orchestra (*Col.*). *White Singers:* Now I can cash in on my advance bragging about Willard Robison, by calling attention to his singing, to his own piano and an orchestra, of "Deep River Blues" and his own "'Tain't So, Honey" (*Vic.*). Hear also Ukulele Ike in "It Goes Like This, That Funny Melody", and "Halfway to Heaven (*Col.*). *Dark songsters:* I'm afraid that "Please Ma'am" (*Col.;* with "Fairy Blues"), as sung by Peg Leg Howell, belongs under my next heading, but if you don't like it, I don't like you. However, you won't be offended by "Graveyard Love" (*Col.*), a haunting tune with striking lyrics, sung in the powerful contralto of Bertha Idaho. Its closing verse:

When I'm dead, no one will grieve;
Just ship my body home.
Mark my coffin C. O. D.
In great big words, on my headstone:
"That's Love" (Lord, Lord, Lord, Lord!)
"That's Grave-Yard Love."

On the other side is "You've Got the Right Eye, But You're Peeping at the Wrong

* So far as I know, anonymous.

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Keyhole". Blues-songs for sophisticated tastes are "The Devil's Gonna Get You" and "Yes Indeed He Do", sung by Bessie Smith (*Col.*). *Pornograph records* (this is no misprint): "My Handy Man", sung with "Guess Who's in Town" by Ethel Waters (*Col.*), and with "Organ Grinder Blues", which is even bluer, by Victoria Spivey (*Ok*). *Revivals:* none other than "My Gal Sal (They Called Her Frivolous Sal)", by Paul Dresser, all jazzed up by Red Nichols and backed with Ted Lewis's old favorite, "Farewell Blues" (*Col.*). Jimmy Rodgers sings "If Brother Jack Were Here" (*You wouldn't dare insult me, Sir, If Brother Jack were here!*) with another relic, "Treasures Untold" (*Vic.*), and actually claims auctorial credit for "Brother Jack" on the label. It was in fact written by Ed Marks, and copyrighted in 1896. (Sigmund Spaeth's *Read 'Em and Weep* and its sequel *Weep Some More* are handy at times like this, and other times.) Vernon Dalhart takes up two sides of a record with "The Bully Song", which is May Irwin's one-time wow "The New Bully". Red Nichols has bust loose with pretentious 12-inch concert arrangements of "Limehouse Blues" and "Dear Old Southland" (*Br.*); and I am glad to be supplied at last, by the Anglo-Persians, with a good foxtrot reading of "Ragging the Scale", a noble old tune (*Br.;* with "Parade of the Wooden Soldiers"). *Folk songs:* "King Kong Kitchie-Kitchie Ki-Mo", which is the immemorial tale of the frog's courting, sung to an old-time banjo by Chubby Parker (*Col.;* with "Down on the Farm"). Also, nothing less than a good version of the famous cocaine song "Willy the Weeper", with the cowboy ballad "Sioux Indians", which you can find in Lomax's collection; these are sung to the ukulele by Marc Williams. *Other Americana:* if you follow the songs of the catastrophes, "The Wreck of the C. & N. O. Special No. 3" is not to be missed; Bud Blue sings it with another museum piece, "A Blind Mother's Prayer" (*Ok*). *For esthetic dancers:* a beautiful practice record of Pierne's "School of the Fauns" and of the morris-dance "Shepherd's Hey" in Grainger's arrangement, played by the Cleveland Symphony (*Br.*).

Popular Sheet Music. Besides songs listed above, these *Foxtrots:* on the strength of "Yascha Michaeloffsky's Melody", Irving Berlin is hereby welcomed back. Perhaps you think he's never been away. One who has never been away is Neil Moret, to whose "Hiawatha" you were bounced on the maternal knee, if you are old enough and not too old. Twenty-eight years ago, under his true name, Charles N. Daniels, he wrote a nice waltz, "You Tell Me Your Dream, I'll Tell You Mine", which is now selling in a new edition. Last year he wrote "Chloe"; this year, "Ready for the River", and now he's loose with "Evenin' ". . . . See also "I Can't Make Her Happy" (the idea is that it will be quite okay if someone else does); "I'm Sorry, Sally", and "Don't Be Like That!" *Waltzes:* try "Lenora", and please try "Playmates".

The New Scores. (Only foxtrots recommended) Cole Porter's *Paris* is grade A, and his astonishing lyrics, A plus. Recommended *in toto,* save for one inexplicable interpolation by other writers; the lyric to "Let's Do It" is probably the doggondest thing ever seen. The Gershwins' *Treasure Girl,* from hearing one rehearsal, will be grade A likewise, and with a good book. Hear in particular "Feeling I'm Falling", "Oh, So Nice", "Where's the Boy?", and "I Don't Think I'll Fall in Love Today", in which last Ira Gershwin outshines, or equi-shines, his brother. . . . In referring, last month, to "Moon of my Delight" (*Chee-Chee*) as a distinguished song, I forgot about the terrible and inexcusable lyric. Kalmar and Ruby's *Good Boy:* A minus; anything recommended. The same team's *Animal Crackers:* B minus, and the best tune is "Watching the Clouds Roll By". Simon and Gensler's *Ups-a-Daisy:* B plus, with covers by Peter Arno. The best tune is justly called "Hot", but see also the "Oh How I Miss You Blues" and "Sweet One". The redoubtable "Pop", of the staff of a contemporary—oh, well, of *The New Yorker*—collaborates on the words. *Hello Yourself!* grade C, with a pensive song "You've Got a Way with You" as its chief ornament. *Three Cheers:* insufficient material for classification at the moment, but try "Pompanola".

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FRONT LINE FICTION

By Lawrence S. Morris

THE novels that are dropping in such profusion from the hands of New York publishers this month have been conceived in every part of the English speaking world. Manuscripts from English towns, the South African veldt, Irish fishing communities, and the little necks of land that creep out into the Atlantic from the coast of the Carolinas—more remote from New York and Kansas City even than Johannesburg is from London—are born as books side by side in Manhattan. And their striking characteristic is not any great differences stamped on them by the variety of environments that bred them, but the deep similarity of human voices under any circumstances on this planet. Those plausible theorists who explain literature in terms of economic power or the rise, say, of the middle class, touch only the surface of the matter. And to take their classifications seriously, though it is true they have the advantage of dispensing with imagination and understanding, one has only to be deaf to the living human voice, which is the only reason for the existence of literature, or, for that matter, of any other art. All other differences drop into insignificance beside the ability of the writer to awaken a new, real, and intimate sense of that voice in ourselves; a gift that can be conferred only by those who look freshly on the life about them and have learned to translate it into adequate words. The "schools" of literature that we hear a great deal about are useful to the artist as means and appear important to historians: but for the human uses literature is meant to be put to there are only living books and musty books. And the proof is in the reading.

The reading of Virginia Woolf's latest novel, *Orlando: A Biography* (Harcourt, Brace, $3.00) will be a delight to any who enjoy the play of a clear, critical mind and a flexible style. Mrs. Woolf's mind draws its observations from a sensibility as delicate as a blade of grass; but instead of being primarily in the service of the heart, as such delicate sensibilities have a way of being, and only accidentally nourishing the mind, Mrs. Woolf's brings all its reports direct to her mind, which uses them with a reckless smile. In *Orlando* she is that pure, and rare, ironist who does not reassure us after each gleam of wit with the sight of a large tear or a bitter grimace. In fact, she is deplorably lacking in the solemnity that marks our annual masterpieces of Fiction and Biography. How can one put on a prophetic air over this gay narrative, which opens with its hero a romantic boy on a country estate in Elizabethan England and closes, on the 11th of October, 1928, over three hundred years later, with the same hero a young woman of thirty-six, weaving in her motor through the crowded traffic of London? Surely Mrs. Woolf is trifling with us.

Yet her method of biography has undeniable advantages. Orlando is permitted to disclose half a dozen personalities, submit to various environments in several centuries and two sexes, yet remain Orlando. How much this matter of still being Orlando amounts to is left to the reader's consideration; but there can be no doubt that most of us go through equally dizzying gymnastics, yet blanket ourselves with one name throughout life, and even lay claim to the pronoun "I". Even the vagaries of Orlando's age have a certain practical justification. "It cannot be denied," says Mrs. Woolf, "that the most successful practitioners of the art of life, often unknown people by the way, somehow contrive to synchronize the sixty or seventy different times which beat simultaneously in every normal human system so that when eleven strikes, all the rest chime in unison, and the present is neither a violent disruption nor completely forgotten in the past." But for Orlando, like

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most of the rest of us—and especially those who have been exposed to the arts early in life—the perception of time has been deranged, with the result that when we look about at the people of the world, "some we know to be dead, though they walk among us; some are not yet born, though they go through the forms of life; others are hundreds of years old though they call themselves thirty-six". On realistic grounds one might protest that Orlando's experience in growing up is not fantastic enough: we know from experience that in our higgledy-piggledy covering of a lifetime, we seldom advance so steadily as Orlando, but jump in an hour's time from thirty-six to seventy and back to twenty-two. But this would be asking Mrs. Woolf to labor her point.

In the course of his, or her, various personalities, Orlando experimented with many ways of life. As a romantic young boy, he was a courtier to Queen Elizabeth and fell in love with a Russian princess who taught him more about women than he was prepared to learn. As a patron of literature, he was rewarded with a lampoon on himself; and as an ambassador in Constantinople, he became the center of an uprising. Transformed into a young woman, Orlando joined a tribe of gypsies and roamed on the barren hills of Asia Minor, ashamed of having once lived in a house that covered nine acres. As hostess to Pope, Swift, and Addison, she discovered the banality of "brilliant" gatherings (it will be seen that Mrs. Woolf's eye is not entirely on the past), and as a matron of the nineteenth century, she achieved Fame and bore a son. In each of the centuries she traversed, she found people to be "chattering, spiteful" creatures, "always telling lies".

This ungracious summary of Orlando's life can give only a hint of the entertainment Mrs. Woolf has prepared in her book. The fluctuations of Orlando's personality and sex make the forced consistency of most novels seem an absurdity; a few deft words, and the pretensions of our soul-biographies collapse. History appears as an illusion, and human character something more than a chameleon. Her wit falls impartially on men and women, critics, novelists, and statesmen.

A single paragraph even of feeling for this ironic quandary we are all familiar with, in a world more preposterous and mysterious than that of Alice in Wonderland, would destroy Mrs. Woolf's book. But with superb skill she maintains her tone of hilarious bantering throughout. By doing so, of course, she forfeits the intensity that is created only when thought and feeling coalesce to produce a single word; she lifts us to no heights; but neither did she intend to. Her genius is critical rather than imaginative, and in what she intended her success is complete.

This success is due, in large measure, to the triumph of her style, which is perfectly adapted to her mood and has, from beginning to end, what Orlando learned from her friends Mr. Swift and Mr. Pope was "the most important part of style". In Mrs. Woolf's own words this secret is "the natural run of the voice in speaking—a quality which none that has not heard it can imitate . . . for it is born of the air, and breaks like a wave on the furniture and rolls and fades away, and is never to be recaptured, least of all by those who prick up their ears, half a century later, and try".

But Mrs. Woolf recaptures it on every page, and following her effortless prose becomes the exciting game of following every thrust and glint of her quick intelligence.

In contrast with the mocking tone of *Orlando* is Peadar O'Donnell's simple, compassionate tale of a fishing village on the island of Inniscara. His book is called *The Way It Was with Them* (With an Introduction by Robert Lynd. Putnam's, $2.50), and judging by external conditions alone, it was a hard way. But by the spirit with which the islanders had met it, they had transformed it into a heroic way. The island was bare and rocky, hemmed in by rough seas, and defying any but the strongest to force a living from it. When the shoals of herring came, there was fierce work for everyone, including the eager, long-legged girls. And for a time afterwards there was plenty to eat on the island and plenty of tea and tobacco and snuff. "For the first time in his life Charlie Doogan sat at the table, and cut bread for himself. Hitherto each cake of bread had been divided out by the mother, now, he,

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Hughie and Sally were free to cut for themselves. Charlie remembered when it had been his ambition to sit just there and cut bread, and butter it himself, and eat until he was satisfied." But there were long spells when no herring came and other fish were scarce; when Mary Doogan fed her ten children, who all slept in one room, on potatoes without even a cup of tea; when Charlie, the second eldest, thought for a time of going to Scotland and earning his passage to America; and when Sally and Nellie were sent off to the hiring-fair on the mainland to get jobs on the farms. In Inniscara a crane built into the chimney to replace the hanging chain, or a floor laid in one of the tiny cabins, meant that the family was doing well.

Anyone who has suffered from novels of the poor must realize the insight that such material requires; a trace of patronizing even in the author's attitude, and all is spoiled. Hence it is a tribute to Mr. O'Donnell that this poverty seems neither sentimentalized nor squalid. Mary Doogan brings her sons up to be lean, strong men, capable of fighting the sea, of being loyal to each other and hospitable to political refugees from the mainland. They get drunk on occasion, dance on occasion, and fall in love. They grumble over their pipes at the rigors of life on the island but resent the disloyalty of those that leave it for America. In their hearts they are convinced that the island is the best place in the world to live.

Mr. O'Donnell's prose echoes this intimacy between his characters and the life they lead. Without being verbally poetic, it often has the sudden, breath-taking effect of poetry. It glows with Mary Doogan's love of her children, her frightened delight when Charlie wins the regatta and her grief when Sally and Nellie leave for the hiring-fair—the first breaking-up of her family. It has a hard, exultant ring in the description of heroic efforts, as when Charlie puts to sea alone in a curragh, after two attempts to launch a boat have been wrecked by the surf, and brings back a doctor for his sister. It has the smell of old pipes and steaming boots when the men crowd into the cabin and sit before the fire.

But the heart of the book remains the splendid figure of the mother, who has been fully realized in Mr. O'Donnell's imagination and transferred to the page without a false note. Only a good writer, as Mr. Lynd points out in his Introduction, could have described Mary Doogan stalking the hen that laid its eggs secretly in the potato field, fainting on the way back with the eggs in her apron, and being carried into the house to die. At the first moment of her fainting spell, she had carefully laid the eggs on the ground. And now, when the neighbors are gathered around her bed saying the rosary and candles have been sent for to light over the corpse—there is something gruesome about a wake that is so prompt with its accessories—Mary rouses herself from her delirium to caution her son about the eggs:

"'Did anybody take in the eggs?' she asked. 'That dog of Neddy's 'll get them if not.'

"'They're in,' he said.

"'That's right,' she said. There was a silence for a time."

Mary Doogan died as simply as she had lived.

Nightseed (Viking, $2.50), by Mr. H. A. Manhood, is a first book, ushered into print with enthusiastic praise from Arnold Bennett on the jacket. Mr. Bennett assures us that Mr. Manhood "observes life afresh", that there can be no two opinions as to the "fundamental excellence" of his style, and that he has a "genuine sense of beauty". To some extent Mr. Bennett's recommendation is a prophecy rather than an appraisal. The book is a collection of short stories, which do give full evidence of a sense of beauty. But Mr. Bennett was wise to qualify his praise of the style with the adjective fundamental. For, though its source is pure, it is strained on many pages by an effort at poetic overtones which drugs its movement and clouds, instead of clarifies, the picture. But this appears to be merely the result of inexperience; Mr. Manhood's mind is clearly not commonplace, and his work is that of an original temperament not yet in full control of its expression. From the underlying vividness of his prose it is safe to say that he *will* observe life afresh before his career is much

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older: at present he is more familiar with literature, and constrained by his sense of the difficulties of his task. His physical world is the countryside, heavy with murmur and fragrance, where sensitive souls are a little too determined to be sinister. Death, insanity, and the agony of lonely spirits, who suffer because the rest of the world cannot understand them, are invoked with all the consecration of a healthy young poet. For, like many first books, *Nightseed* rings truer in its descriptions of nature than in those of people.

Yet, already in this first book, there are several stories, such as "The Dainty Pike", "Values", and "The Peach Tree", which show Mr. Manhood emerging as an artist in firm control over his material. A single example will give the taste of his prose. He is introducing the Bishop, in "The Peach Tree", celebrating his birthday by indulging in foods that he knows from experience his stomach cannot cope with:

"For the first and last time that year the Bishop had lunched to his liking and was wondering, as he sailed half an almond in the dregs of his sherry, whether Matilde—the archtype of all housekeepers—had renewed the washer of the stomach pump, when he was raked by a jangle of voices penetrating from the usually stagnant lake of the Close. He frowned with his accustomed ease, laying a careful hand upon his pumice-bright hair, over which Matilde had sprayed a little too much cologne-water, gripping his ivory crucifix with unpriestly testiness—he must remind her to clean it again with lemon-juice—finally addressing a pulpit-shaped Flaxman vase: 'Am I to have *no* peace at all? May not I share a *single* quiet moment of my birthday even with the Lord?' "

A young man who, at the age of twenty-four, imagines his Bishop as clearly as this, obviously has distinguished novels waiting for him around the corner of the next few years.

Julia Peterkin's new novel of negroes on the Blue Brook Plantation, *Scarlet Sister Mary* (Bobbs-Merrill, $2.50), is a book that for its simplicity, its skilful use of a local dialect, and the clear stream of life running through it, might be set beside *The Way It Was with Them*. But the sort of life it records is very different from that of the hardy fishermen of Inniscara. On the little neck of land off the southern coast of America, "the loamy red fields are bordered by quiet woodlands. A cluster of ancient cabins near the river is sheltered by a grove of giant moss-hung live oaks. . . . The earth's richness and the sun's warmth make living an easy thing. Years go by without leaving a mark or footprint".

Sister Mary (pronounced Si May-e) was a leader among the young girls on the plantation. They were all "much alike, with slender, well-shaped bodies, scarcely hidden by the plain skimpy garments they wore. They went barefooted all the week, but every Sunday morning, after undoing their black woolly hair and rewrapping it into neat rolls with white ball thread, they put on shoes and stockings and hats and Sunday dresses and went to church". At fifteen Mary was ready to marry July, the wildest young buck in the Quarters. In fact, she had anticipated the ceremony, but that was not yet known to any one except Maum Hannah.

She married July, against everybody's advice, bore his son, and was soon abandoned. For July went off on a one-day excursion with Cinder and was not seen again for twenty years. It was learned later that he had abandoned Cinder too, for July was a young man who liked variety almost as much as he liked his guitar. For several months after the day of the excursion Mary endured her loneliness and longed to die; then she found consolation with July's brother, June. And during the next twenty years—with the help of an unexcelled love charm—with many other handsome and willing men of the Quarters, married or not, as her fancy chose. Her children multiplied and lived together as easily as if they had all had the same father; Mary worked to support them, sang and smiled on ever-new men; grew ripe and understanding in spirit, and remained keen-eyed and supple in body. Since she had been expelled from the church and hence was no longer bound by its regulations, there could really be no harm in her sinning; and as happiness goes, Si May-e was happy during

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those years. That is to say that when July finally appeared on her doorstep once more, she grew dizzy and drove him away violently lest her heart should be broken a second time.

To convey the fullness and warmth and insight of Mrs. Peterkin's book, it would be necessary to quote it complete, for extracts would not give its quiet sureness of development. Si May-e did little reflecting about life, but she absorbed it through the pores of her smooth, gleaming skin. And from the time the reader meets her, on her wedding morning, standing slim and naked before the fire and licking bits of yam off her fingers, to the night when her dead son appears to her in a dream and rebukes her for her sins, she has matured and deepened so imperceptibly that it would be hard to put one's finger on any single page and say, This was when Si May-e acquired wisdom. But acquire it she undoubtedly did, though she was unaware of the fact. For she had changed from a greedy young girl, confident that July would make her happy, into a wise woman who "birthed" her children carefully but without fuss and valued happiness for the accident that it is. The life that flows through her and the rest of the Quarters is full of old memories, mellow lights, and fresh desires. The treacherous promise of the rich earth and the old wisdom of human mortality are accepted equally as facts. But the best proof of Mrs. Peterkin's skill is that one hardly thinks of her as the author of this tale, or of the book as a novel. One simply watches Si May-e and Maum Hannah and knows that they are living there on the Neck, as unquestioned as sunlight on a meadow.

NOVELS ON THE TABLE

By Margaret Cheney Dawson

SOMETHING like a very dry wine is the new Aldous Huxley book, *Point Counter Point* (Doubleday, Doran, $2.50), suave stimulant, civilized potion, begetter of thought—sometimes, unexpectedly, a depressant. But structurally it is built not on taste, but on sound, and on an intricate of the form of sound called music. Through the notebook of Philip Quarles, novelist within the novel, the author states his problem: "The musicalization of fiction . . . the whole range of thought and feeling, yet all in relation to a ridiculous little waltz tune. Get this into a novel. How? The abrupt transitions are easy enough. All you need is a sufficiency of characters and parallel contrapuntal plots". In following this formula, Mr. Huxley is successful—and no small feat, at that. The theme: "passion and reason, self division's cause", and the recurrent defeat of one by the other. So pronounced is this defeat, so hideous the monstrosities which over-civilized brains make of under-civilized feelings, that finally we have a kind of *ballet méchanique*—clean, bony structure, nerve-tearing sounds. Only in the instance of Mark and Mary Rampion, the painter and his wife, is there anything like a resolution. The relationship between these two is not fragmentary, but whole and harmonious. Here also there is a bad sag in the tempo, due, astoundingly enough, to the intrusion of a Message and a Mission. As a bitter, inhibited youth coming into contact with a woman powerfully serene, untouched by hardship and class hatred, Mark Rampion is a distinct person, his marriage a significant experience. After that he becomes simply a mouth. His everlasting subject is the dire effect of mechanizing civilization. Soon we are going to be all head and no body. We have bartered our humanity for irrelevant abstractions, "the fruits of intellectualism—the morning paper, the radio, the cinema . . . tanks and trinitrotoluol; Rockefeller and Mond". Since this argument is not ar-

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resting in its newness, nor over adroitly presented, the subordination of Rampion's character to it is unjustifiable. Remembering the delightful and impartial cruelty with which Mr. Huxley is wont to draw one character after another in the image of a pleasing human being, and then caricature each one with some tiny, deft distortion, it is discomforting to find him solemnly going H. G. Wells over an idea. In general, avoidance of this kind of wordy slogging is one of Mr. Huxley's strongest points. His brilliance, his erudition are meat indeed for arguments, conversations. But his dexterity in fusing thoughts and personalities, in deriving one from the other, makes the material dramatic. A "novel of ideas" treated in this way transcends the mental exhibitionism of the William Clissold genre.

Turn now from wine to a cup of tepid coffee, and contemplate Mr. Louis Untermeyer's first novel, *Moses* (Harcourt, Brace, $2.50). Where Mr. Huxley surmounted the difficulties of giving point and climax to a mass of ideas, Mr. Untermeyer has seized upon material in itself almost violently dramatic, and turned it into as flat a chronicle as you could find in a month of Sundays. Here are no twistings of the over-subtle mind, but the steady march of spectacular events. A city falls in flames, and Moses, changeling prince of Egypt, flees into exile. When he returns he carries in his heart a new God, and a new kinship for the childish, suffering race of Egypt's slaves. Jahveh will deliver his people. Moses will lead him. And so the hail falls, the waters of the Nile are fouled with blood, dank spotty frogs and slimy locusts swarm over the land. And Egypt's soldiers secretly beg the Hebrews: "Go. Take your God of vengeance with you. We will not bar the way". And so on, through the Red Sea waters, through the wanderings and battles of the wilderness, to the final triumphant start for Canaan; Moses watching the tribes swing by, Reuben and Judah and Levi and Gad—Moses, never to see the promised land—*"But Joseph's children shall break down the hills, marching, marching to Canaan".*

Feel the surge of poetry, the pounding rhythm of a huge drama. And read the stale pages, the windy words encasing it. It is inexplicable. So steeped in poetry, so immersed in the lore of ancient Egypt, perhaps Mr. Untermeyer was afraid of himself. Indeed there are painful evidences of an effort to enliven matters. Say the soldiers of Egypt, "What's it to *you?*" Cries Moses, gleefully, "It won't be long now". Is last year's slang supposed to vitalize the flight out of Egypt, just as limping platitudes were recently called upon to grace poor Helen of Troy? If Mr. Untermeyer wanted to take Moses and the Hebrews from biblical clouds into a warmer, human light, he did not pursue his object enough. The events as he tells them have neither the majesty of miracles nor the coarse strength of reality. They dwindle into a kind of monotony.

Dorothy Van Doren titles her latest book *Brother and Brother* (Doubleday, Doran, $2.00). Living in the bosom of a highly editorial family, Mrs. Van Doren is said to have started writing because of atmospheric pressure. Fortunately, ability seems to have had something to do with it, too. *Brother and Brother,* her third novel, contains two characters of distinction. Sad to say these are neither Brother nor Brother. They are Mrs. Downing, who mothers her four childen, manages her sour, little-hearted husband, and keeps her house with a rare mixture of tolerance and efficiency; and Laly, pale, bungling little girl adopted into the Downing household when her Granny died. On cold days, when the Downing children raced along roads, with bright eyes and scarlet cheeks, Laly's face was red "down the middle", and her heart did queer things when she ran. In the house she was awkward, unhelpful. The children did not "take her in" very much. Later, when she grew up and married Ellery Downing, her helplessness grew into an awful, confused apathy. She used to sit by the window. . . . Ellery himself, oldest of the Downings, is first a boy who draws pictures of everything he sees, and later a successful owner of a chain of stores. His passion for art finds an outlet in John, who from childhood quietly pursues his course and finally becomes a sculptor. The understanding between these two is capably presented and makes an attractive theme. But it is not

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strong enough to bear the weight of the book. Nor does it sustain the rather sentimental title. John, in fact, is just a little tin man with nice shiny attributes painted on him here and there. Ellery, as son of Mrs. Downing and husband of Laly, is perhaps the pivotal character, but he is not made to assume this rôle and the story is consequently off-center. Nevertheless there is enough, especially in the first part of the book and in the main female characters, to make it memorable.

The little Vicomte de Granbord wanted scarlet heels on his shoes. But of course that would have been silly, his mother told him. It was the same way with all his longings for the courtly grace of a bygone age. When the Vicomte grew older and seriously tried to revive the old order a series of hard, contemptuous blows met his eagerness. In *Scarlet Heels* (Liveright, $2.50) Edith M. Stern tells of this proud, silly little man, and of his stubborn refusal to accept modern civilization, with unpretentious charm and a real feeling for gesture.

The Grandson, by Hildur Dixelius (Dutton, $2.50) is the last volume of a trilogy which in *The Son* and *The Minister's Daughter* treated of Pastor Per Olaf's father and grandmother. The scene is laid in the north of Sweden, and the story of Per Olaf's spiritual fight to keep faith with his crazy wife is told in those compact, atmospheric sentences so typical of recent Scandinavian writings that I am moved to wonder at what epoch the polysyllable fell into disrepute among Northern thinkers. And wouldn't a conversation between, say, two Swedish authors sound like a metronome?

A. Hamilton Gibbs, whose *Soundings* was a best-seller in 1925, sets out to best-sell himself again in *Harness* (Little, Brown, $2.50), with some degree of success. Grappling with the war survivor's ominous question of "what-shall-we-do-with-ourselves-now?" he shows Michael and Patricia Gordon, happily married but still restless for achievement. Michael writes; Pat goes on the stage. But as everyone knows, in the theatre men are fops and cads and women top-heavy with vanity. So that it takes quite a bit of pre-war he-manliness on Michael's part to straighten things out—and provide a stinging climax. Apparently living in Plymouth County, Massachusetts, has made Mr. Gibbs nostalgic for England, for his book is peppered with enough "old beans", "cheerio's" and "right-o's" to make the most determined Anglomaniac shudder.

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THE DEGRADATION OF DOGMA

By Gilbert Seldes

IT is a pity that neither political nor religious fundamentalism has found an American apologist of the first order. The devil, these days, has not only all the good tunes, but most of the good and effective words as well; against radicalism, liberalism, and realism, there is no opposition of a strong reactionary group, nor even of a conservative group with intellectual capacity to understand and meet the attack. Calling Mencken bad names does not constitute a policy.

The evil result of this one-sided battle is that the genuine, interesting, and important argument on the fundamentalist side is lost from sight. One thinks of the evangelical churches, the fanatics of prohibition, the Klan, the dubious journalism about racial supremacy, and the publicity of the Rev. John Roach Straton as summing up all the intelligence of one side. Most of these things and people are repudiated by conservatives, to be sure, but the conservatives offer nothing active in their place. And the fundamentalist clowns are so absurd that it becomes impossible to believe they have any justification whatever.

Yet a serious Protestant could honestly say that since the Reformation his creed has been under enfilading fire. There was always the Catholic Church, so admirably served by wit and intelligence; there came later the terrific attacks upon Calvinism which created liberal Christianity—particularly Unitarianism and Universalism in America; between these two the strait sect is always in a narrow place, and if it ever issues victorious from a skirmish, all the infidels of the world are waiting to fall upon it. One could write quite a decent history of Methodism in America showing it always fighting on the side of right, always beleaguered, always courageous, stamping out horrid heresies, keeping alive faith in Christ and belief in God, devoted always to the salvation of the common man. But most of the histories now written show us all the Protestant sects as benighted and fanatical, the last enemies of freedom in America.

I have done something of this sort myself, speculating on the reasons for the decline and degradation of dogmatic Christianity (apart from Catholicism) in this country. It is not entirely a theological question, for we are living in a community created by the generations between 1830 and 1880; the story of social change in America is involved in the story of religious change. What we drink, what we read, what we see on the stage, what we do to aliens and Bolshevists, are all partially the result of what our forefathers thought about salvation. Because we happen to think differently, we tend to undervalue their belief, to jeer at it as a relic of the Middle Ages, forgetting that a considerable number of intelligent people consider the Middle Ages the most noble period in the history of human development, a period ruined by the excesses of the Renaissance and the mistaken zeal of the Reformation. We remember that ministers of the Gospel took part in the persecution of witches and promised their congregations that the supreme ecstasy of the saved would be to see their loved ones suffering in Hell; but we forget that they believed in God.

So long as that belief was held in some degree of purity, with intellectual candor, by men of good minds and comparatively clean hearts, dogma had dignity. The supreme example, according to my mind, is Jonathan Edwards. I am unable to accept his theology and find his doctrine intolerable; but I cannot see how anyone can deny that his worship of God had grandeur. Even the lesser figure of Cotton Mather whom Ralph and Louise Boas call *Keeper of the Puritan Conscience* (Harper, $3.50), gives a feeling of integrity which one does not associate with the evangelists of our own time. Mather's

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new biographers have done an interesting thing: they have taken an almost apocryphal figure, found him "curiously lacking in historical charm", yet managed to bring him to life; they have placed him in relation to his time and have critically examined the central episode of his life—his relation to the witch-hunt in Massachusetts, diminishing the evil men may hereafter attribute to him and explaining the phenomenon in relation to everything in the life of New England at the time; and having done this important work (not without indicating the relation between Mather's religious excesses and his sexual nature) they have been content to declare him a man of secondary importance. This is rare in biographers. They have seen that Edwards was a creative force for the next century, while Mather was only a concentration of the vital forces of his own time:

"The modern reader would be more sympathetic if he felt that Cotton Mather had really any power of critical analysis. . . . What is lacking is the power to see into the heart of things. Cotton Mather's learning, like his 'good devices', is purely superficial. . . . What he published he published for a purpose, to bolster up a waning tradition, to glorify God, to be useful, to do good. . . . In the history of American thought he is a towering figure, though as an illustration, not as an influence. . . ."

Edwards is enthralling, but difficult reading, and I know of no recent biography of him; I have heard on excellent authority that Vernon Louis Parrington's discussion of him in *Main Currents of American Thought* is extremely good. Mather's personal life seems the more interesting; his extraordinary relation to his father, his affairs with his wives, his fight for inoculation, and his relation to witchcraft are all absorbing; his intellectual life is not important, but, as the authors say, he is an illustration: he shows to what extreme Puritanism could go.

It is fundamental to remember that Methodism broke down Calvinism, that the wine of the Puritans was diluted and the drama of salvation turned to melodrama after 1800 in America. (The first of the great camp meetings took place in 1799.) According to Edwards and Mather, even of those who accepted Christ, only a few were elected to be saved; according to later evangelical practise, all who went through the crisis of conversion were saved; according to broader sects, all who professed Christ, even without the conviction of sin, were saved. The great evangelists all belonged in the middle category which "combined the best features of both" of the others: it was still a threat and it was still a promise. This evangelism (I suspect) is the immediate cause of the intellectual decline of fundamentalism in our country: it was the democratization of theology, it dealt in hysteria and vulgarity, and it definitely went out for great numbers. The delicate spiritual process which makes saints, anchorites, and sometimes madmen, was practised on a huge scale, in public, in crowds of ten and twenty thousand, to the accompaniment of shouts and cries and sexual incitements, with the terrible contagion of the mob gathering after months of loneliness and want.

The story of this vast movement is told in *Evangelized America,* by Grover C. Loud (Dial Press, $4.00). Part of it is related like this:

"While the clean frontal flame of the westering revival was steadily lighting the way across the country, other fires, luridly gleaming under a constantly shifting pall of unwholesome smoke, were burning back and forth over the ground behind, blistering souls and blighting minds. Over and over again the same rural regions would be seared by the withering blasts of diverse demonologies burgeoning from the innate superstition of the ignorant, credulous and excitable naïve rustic. Variegated New Lights blazed through and after them hydra-headed sects whelped from conjury with Scriptures."

There must be simpler ways of telling what happened. However, if you can get over these passages and the author's impression that Moody was high-water mark (that is, in comparison with Edwards; Moody was high enough measured by our Sundays and Utleys and MacPhersons) he will find *Evangelized America* a good running narrative of the revival movement. It seems to me out of focus in its dealings with the past because it treats scantily the single figure of

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genuine social and doctrinal significance: Charles Grandison Finney. In the present rush of books on revivalism and its results (half a dozen have been issued and I know of several in process of writing) Finney will no doubt have a book to himself soon, as the less important, but more picturesque Lorenzo Dow already has (*Lorenzo Dow: The Bearer of the Word,* by Charles Coleman Sellers. Minton, Balch, $3.50). Dow was an early itinerant, an eccentric and a practical joker; his importance, as his biographer seems to feel, is also that of an illustration, but where Mather is an oil painting, Dow is a cartoon. He was a parody of evangelism at the very beginning of evangelism and his interest to posterity is due to his relation to the "physical jerks" of the early camp meetings.

Evangelized America, and *The Confusion of Tongues* (by Charles W. Ferguson. Doubleday, Doran, $3.50) both come down to the lady of Los Angeles; and the modern section of the former overlaps some of the material of the latter. Mr. Loud seems sensitive to the decline of grandeur in evangelism since the time of Moody; Mr. Ferguson, writing almost entirely about contemporaries, treats them all with good-natured cynicism: Pastor Russell, Buchman, the directors of Unity, and dozens of sects are all subjected to a cool, but not sneering, appraisal. The book is partly in *The American Mercury* mode, but it escapes the pitfalls nicely, especially the snare of imputing motives. I cannot, myself, believe in the complete honesty of some of the cult leaders, but I think the best way is to assume that honesty and to discover where it leads. What both Mr. Loud and Mr. Ferguson fail to emphasize is the relation between the cults and movements they discuss and the background of American life, the emergence and disappearance of social and personal cults, and the like. (Mr. Ferguson does a nice job on Atheism as a cult; it remains only to discover at what church the Menckenites worship every Thursday.) The Klan and Prohibition are recognized as outgrowths of religious frenzy; but half a hundred other movements are just as surely associated with them. It is at least worth noting that a form of companionate marriage was tried in the 1870's under the impulse of a profound religious feeling, and I suspect that other contemporary movements would disclose similar parallels and, sometimes, definite causal relations.

It is hard not to be carried away by a single similarity. In my own experience I have found that if I discover any single relation between two things—a relation no one else has thought worthy of mention, perhaps—I have to fight down a tendency to make my discovery more important than all the others put together. But in the matter of religious excitement and social experiment the evidence is definite and overwhelming. It is as clear in America as it is in England. In the preface to Dr. Abram Lipsky's *John Wesley* (Simon & Schuster, $3.00), Edmond Schere is quoted: "As we know her today, with her prudish and serious literature, with her Biblical language, with her national piety, with her middle class whose exemplary morality constitutes the strength of the country, England is the work of Methodism". In America the situation is more complicated, since the creation of a new state, the conquest of the wilderness, the progress of mechanics, and the interplay of pioneer and immigrant worked with (and often against) revivalism and its fruits. But the interaction of all these forces serves only to make more specific the part played by evangelism.

If religious hysteria is related to its background, the necessity for irony virtually disappears. It is not even seemly to jeer at the few saints and the many fanatics who took part in the movement; since history obligingly supplies its own comment. For another reason it is not particularly illuminating to debunk historical characters, to dig out obscure and unimportant things discreditable to them, and to name them in terms of psychoanalysis—unless you want to make a contribution to that science itself. But it is illuminating to know the sources of action. I reject any idea that all of Wesley's work was *due* to his extraordinary relations with women, but I think Dr. Lipsky's statement is exact and just:

". . . We have been invited to assume that Wesley's religious thinking went on in a separate compartment of his mind in which

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the names of Betty Kirkham, Sophia Hopkey, Mrs. Hawkins, Grace Murray, Mrs. Vazeille and Sarah Ryan were never heard. His various protestations of sin and want of true faith . . . have not been taken in their obvious meaning but as if they related to events in a disembodied spiritual universe. But men hardly express themselves as Wesley did when they mean abstract sin and problems in speculative theology."

The names mentioned above figure perhaps a little too much in Dr. Lipsky's book, and he thinks "it hardly would be an exaggeration to say that Methodism had its birth in the broken romance with Sophia Hopkey", where it would be as accurate to say that Methodism was already beginning and had something to do with the breaking of the romance. But (in spite of the method of presenting "a series of vivid portraits" as the jacket puts it) Dr. Lipsky has managed to indicate the sources of Methodism and the range of its effects. It was out of his immediate province, but I wish he had continued and given a full account of the impact of Methodism upon American Puritanism, linking his subject with Edwards and so with the entire religious history of America.

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POETS AND POETASTERS

By Babette Deutsch

IN the opening lines of the title-poem of his latest book, Yeats asks:

> What shall I do with this absurdity—
> O heart, O troubled heart—this caricature,
> Decrepit age that has been tied to me
> As to a dog's tail?

And answers:

> It seems that I must bid the Muse go pack,
> Choose Plato and Plotinus for a friend
> Until imagination, ear and eye,
> Can be content with argument and deal
> In abstract things; or be derided by
> A sort of battered kettle at the heel.

Now it is the excellence of this Irishman's verse, as it is that of every great poet, never, in dalliance with the Muse, to forget the Platonic doctrine, although he sometimes remembers it only to quarrel with it. It has been his business to recapture the stern, the radiant Idea, to set it forth for our contemplation, for our consolation—to give us, in a word, the world as children and philosophers and poets have it: under the aspect of eternity. It is this quality of his most recent volume, *The Tower* (Macmillan, $2.00), that sets it apart from all the other books to be mentioned here, except one.

It would be obvious from this latest work of his, if it were not already common knowledge, that Yeats has fashioned for himself a metaphysical refuge from the slings and arrows of outrageous fortune. The enchanting images that jewel these pages are all packed, for him, with the peculiar significance that belongs to his individual philosophy. And even readers who cannot invest his images with precisely the same meaning, must find in the poems evidence of a spiritual maturity that is as exalting as it is rare. One discovers it in the initial piece in the collection, for all its obscure allusions. I quote the second and third parts of it:

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> An aged man is but a paltry thing,
> A tattered coat upon a stick, unless
> Soul clap its hands and sing, and louder sing
> For every tatter in its mortal dress,
> Nor is there singing school but studying
> Monuments of its own magnificence;
> And therefore I have sailed the seas and come
> To the holy city of Byzantium.

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> O sages standing in God's holy fire
> As in the gold mosaic of a wall,
> Come from the holy fire, perne in a gyre,
> And be the singing masters of my soul.
> Consume my heart away; sick with desire
> And fastened to a dying animal
> It knows not what it is; and gather me
> Into the artifice of eternity.

Most of the lyrics contained here attest to this grave preoccupation of the ageing poet. They give proof, too, that he has suffered that Vision of Evil which, he believes, is the matrix of such durable verse as that of Dante and Villon. His portion, it is true, has been honor and not exile, but anyone reading the lines called "Nineteen-Nineteen", bitter memento of a harsh season, will find, if he needs it, sufficient proof that honor is no antidote for heartache.

Technically, these lyrics are full of interest, written, as they are, in a style almost colloquial in its simplicity, and yet charged with an austere beauty. The cadences are broken, but so skilfully as to leave an effect of complete fluency. The rhymes are delicate and right. In every particular, this is the most distinguished book of poetry the year has seen.

The one other poet who has achieved a similar unity of vision—though how different a one!—is Robert Frost. His latest vol-

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ume, *West-Running Brook* (Holt, $2.50), is slight, physically speaking, and contains several pieces that are unworthy of inclusion. Such, for example, are several quatrains, and the piece called "Rose Family", which might have been written by Austin Dobson in his sleep. These flaws notwithstanding, the book as a whole has the seriousness and acuteness which marks all of Frost's work, and while it shows no impressive advance upon his previous achievement, that is high enough to make any new collection of his important. There are no narrative pieces. The lyrics are compact of pity and sly humor and hardihood, all expressed in an easy conversational tone, and all characterized by that familiarity with, and devotion to, the —shall we say, domesticated? — natural scene, to which Frost has accustomed us. It is seldom that a line strikes one as particularly fine, a phrase as peculiarly fitting, a whole poem as singularly lyrical, yet almost every piece is wrought of the true gold of poetry. As for the animating spirit of the volume, one finds it clearest, perhaps, in the title-poem, a dialogue in which one fancies the poet to have the final word, when in these terms he speaks of existence:

> It flows beside us in this water brook,
> But it flows over us. It flows between us
> To separate us for a panic moment.
> It flows between us, over us, and *with* us.
> And it is time, strength, tone, light, life and love—
> And even substance lapsing unsubstantial;
> The universal cataract of death
> That spends to nothingness—and unresisted,
> Save by some strange resistance in itself,
> Not just a swerving, but a throwing back,
> As if regret were in it and were sacred.
> It has this throwing backward on itself
> So that the fall of most of it is always
> Raising a little, sending up a little. . . .
> It is this backward motion toward the source,
> Against the stream, that most we see ourselves in,
> The tribute of the current to the source.
> It is from this in nature we are from.
> It is most us.

Among the poems that wear charm like a flower or burn with a special vitality are "Birthplace", "The Bear", "Sand Dunes", "On Looking Up By Chance At The Constellations", "Riders", "Bereft", "Canis Major" and "Once By The Pacific".

The posthumous volume of Hardy's verse *Winter Words in Various Moods and Metres* (Macmillan, $1.50), might be expected to have a singleness of effect, if not of purpose, such as bodies forth a man's philosophy. But it is oddly unsatisfactory in this. The dreary tone of the reflection on his eighty-sixth birthday, called "He Never Expected Much", and bearing witness that he got what he expected, runs through the entire book, which, by the way, contains some things written as much as forty-odd years ago. Where he refrains from the wry-faced commentary of a weary ancient, it is to give a brief notation of nature, and, more often, to relate some rural melodrama of love deceived, murder, adultery, bastardy. These are neither striking in themselves, nor well told. Hardy's cadences are jerky and monotonous, his vocabulary limited and often out of key with the lyric mood, nor is there either rich image or arresting thought to compensate for the want of other depths and graces.

At the risk of being laughed out of court, I must recommend *Time Importuned* (Viking, $1.75) by Sylvia Townsend Warner, the shrewd young author of *Lolly Willowes* and *Mr. Fortune's Maggot,* as an improvement on the last volume by the late dean of English letters. Miss Warner uses much the same material: country romances, country scenes, the sentiments evoked by the sight of a rural graveyard, a deserted house, a gay garment put aside—but with what different effect! For one thing, she is not hampered by a taste for such words as "nescientness" and "tragedy-brink". For another, she has a more delicate and incisive brush, as when she speaks of catkins "Whose pewter fur rose-flushed Sprays gold-dust and smells balm", or, in "Too Early Spring", notes how "Leaves were crowding prick-eared to the live air". And finally, it is not merely in the three lyrics to which she gives the title "Triumphs of Sensibility" that she shows an eerie alertness seldom evinced by that Necessity-hounded old man with whom I have ventured to compare her.

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The other volumes that spill over my desk are of so diverse an order that it is impossible to link one to another by any logic. The sole bond of union between them is that they are all in verse. *The Legend of Quincibald,* by Leonard Bacon (Harper, $2.00), is a long poem which the publishers have, with more justification than kindness, called a "tour de force", and which the author defends in a not too clear Introduction as "an attempt to deal with the stuff of personality in the only way in which that stuff can be dealt with—that is to say, symbolically". I have tried to surrender myself, as he begs his reader to do, "to the succession and flow of the images", without endeavoring "to torture the symbolism into allegory", but although I have found a meaning in the poem, I wonder, begging the poet's pardon, whether it is quite worth either his effort or the reader's. One learns that humor and patience are a cure for the unendurable; that beauty and evil, fact and fancy, creation and destruction are inextricably intertwined; that we cleanse our spiritual wounds only with self-inflicted steel. It may be well enough to repeat such hoary wisdom, but not in so tortuous a manner.

Equally didactic and far more sententious is *A Son of Earth,* the collected poems of William Ellery Leonard (Viking, $3.00). They have been chronologically arranged, and the author explains that the volume is "in intention, a 'poem-sequence', in eighteen episodes, about one life time". Unfortunately, Mr. Leonard's capacities as a poet seem to have been fairly exhausted by the remarkable sonnet-sequence in which he related the most tragic portion of his history: *Two Lives.* Except for a few "unpublished leaves" from that record (these appeared previously in *The First American Caravan*), also the poem called "Indian Summer", and one fine sonnet to Shakespeare, there seems nothing in the present volume that approaches that signal performance.

In *The Lost Lyrist* (Harper, $2.00) Elizabeth Hollister Frost has wrung music out of sorrow as poets have done through the ages. There is an authenticity about the book that gives an emotional value even to the poems of lesser worth. Sometimes Mrs. Frost comes close to the Dicksinsonian touch, as in the lines called "News", and "Toys". The illustrations are very much *de trop.*

Travelling Standing Still (Knopf, $2.00) represents Genevieve Taggard's selection "of her best poetic work of ten years". There are some lovely and memorable things here, chief among them, for me, "Under Bloom and Over Stone", "With Child", "Command From A Hammock", and "Ice Age". There are one or two pieces that might have been omitted, and one or two missing from the collection that I wish she had seen fit to include, but that is a case of *de gustibus.* This slender book affords a drop of pure lyricism grateful to a thirsty ear.

Another melodious verse-maker is Virginia Moore in *Sweet Water and Bitter* (Harcourt, $1.75). She is heavily indebted to her contemporaries, and, by the same token, she lacks Miss Taggards clear individual note. But such poems as "Bird of Passage" and "Cataract" show her capable of fine things.

There is nothing in the least lyrical about Mr. Allen Tate's productions in *Mr. Pope and other poems* (Minton, Balch, $2.00). And this in spite of the fact that his work appears to be rooted in literature, rather than in life. It is packed with allusion, with reference, with echoes. Not that Mr. Tate fails of originality. He is, indeed, unique. But he is also esoteric, involute, wilfully difficult. He admires such words as "strict . . . precise . . . accurate", but his images crowd too fast upon the eye to permit of strictness, precision, accuracy, in his verse. Take, for example, these lines:

> Her touselled eyes no longer rinse the haze
> Of winter sprawled like a carcass by the door.

I could wish Mr. Tate deprived of his John Webster, his T. S. Eliot, his Propertius, and the rest, in the belief that on an island desert of books he might produce something of more value than his present *objets d'art.*

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FIGURES OF HISTORY

By Foster Rhea Dulles

IN the stream of biography which continues to flow from our presses there is no character of history who can escape the re-interpretation of the modern writer. The more staid figures of the past may be rather mercilessly debunked, but those less praiseworthy are often rehabilitated. We are given new conceptions of character which sometimes prove fresh and stimulating, but not necessarily any more convincing than the conventional portraits of an age of supression.

In the group of books now being reviewed, debunking is not altogether in favor. Captain John Smith does not fare too well and General Grant is subjected to severe analysis, but Fox, James the Second and Christopher Columbus are cast in heroic mold. Even the mysterious figure of Rasputin becomes less sinister.

In writing *Charles James Fox* (Cosmopolitan, $5.00), John Drinkwater might easily have emphasized the shadier qualities of a man who was almost as well known in London for his gambling as for his statesmanship. But without glossing over Fox's passion for the gaming-table he deals almost entirely with the political life of the first great English liberal. The figure of Fox which emerges from Mr. Drinkwater's swift-moving pages is that of a courageous leader of lost causes and forlorn hopes, who could be tempted by no handful of silver, by no riband to stick in his coat.

In America we should be particularly interested in this study of the man who stood shoulder to shoulder with Burke in the House of Commons and fought to defend our liberties, but who unlike Burke remained faithful to his belief in liberalism and tolerance throughout the fateful days of the French Revolution. He was a patriot whose love for England was so great that he did not hesitate to oppose her course, even in time of war when convinced that it was not true to English traditions of justice.

Mr. Drinkwater has little patience with those who would decry Fox's service to his country because his political beliefs forced him into the Opposition throughout most of his career. "If patriotic service consists merely in beating the Froggies or making the damned Yanks run, and in planting suitable flags from pole to pole," he writes, "then Fox little merits the admiration of his countrymen. But if to find that corruption in your own house is even more intolerable than it is elsewhere; if to care more for honor than for gain; if to insist on toleration in thought and speech; if, in short, to have been, more perhaps than any other man, the origin of much that is best in English liberalism, its courage and generosity and farsightedness, is to deserve the gratitude of Englishmen, then Fox's place in our national life is a secure and eminent one."

There are vivid portraits in this book beside the admirable one of Charles James Fox: George III, a kindly and considerate gentleman in private life but as a king a figure of stupid and habitual arrogance, "intolerant to the point of insanity of the very name of independence"; Lord North, his docile minister who "never during his long ministry offended the royal presence with a constructive idea"; Edmund Burke, William Pitt, the Prince of Wales, John Wilkes and a host of others. They are brought to life with a keen insight into their character and colorful descriptions of their personality.

Mr. Drinkwater has, in short, written a biography of the first order, a narrative of ideas dominated by the figure of Fox and blocked out against a satisfying picture of England at the close of the eighteenth century. Here is the American Revolution from the point of view of an English liberal.

If Mr. Drinkwater has given us an admir-

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ing picture of Fox which we may accept or not according to preconceived opinions of the significance of liberalism, in *James the Second* (Lippincott, $4.00) Hilaire Belloc challenges the world to revise its opinion of a figure which the Whig historians have not treated too kindly. Writing brilliantly and with high enthusiasm, Mr. Belloc shows us a James the Second who has been sadly maligned, a man possessing almost all the virtues, animated by religious fervor and sincere patriotism, whose only faults were a too confiding trust in his fellowmen and an inability to understand the workings of their minds. According to Mr. Belloc, it was his unswerving moral strength combined with his limitation of political judgment, that caused this king to succumb under the pressure of circumstance where another lesser man might have held out at least a little longer.

One man's obstinacy is another man's determination, one man's short-sightedness is another man's loyalty to a passing order, and in the case of James the Second there are religious and political convictions which may entirely warp our judgment. It is easy to understand Mr. Belloc's enthusiasms even though we cannot share them, and to admit that while it seems impossible to accept his James the Second, this unfortunate king may not have been so black as he has been painted.

There is nothing half-way about this book. James is defended on every score. His attempt to promote Catholicism was a battle waged solely in behalf of religious tolerance, and his severity in suppressing Monmouth's rebellion is open to no criticism. Even Lord Chief Justice Jeffreys was a much misunderstood man.

But it is useless to cavil over details. Mr. Belloc disarms all criticism on the score of partiality, if we avoid the term prejudice, by frankly stating in reference to the incidents of James's life which he has chosen to relate, that his book "is not biography, still less a chronicle, but an appreciation".

It is not necessary to agree with or to accept his conclusions to recognize that he has written a provocative, and above all a stimulating book. His study of James presents a refreshing and orthodox picture of a king who has few defenders.

The most amazing thing about that thoroughly amazing book, René Fülöp-Miller's *Rasputin—the Holy Devil* (Viking, $5.00), is that the incredible story he tells deals with a period of Russian history so recent as the first two decades of this century. If its scenes were laid during the reign of the half-mad Ivan the Terrible we might more easily accept it. But here is a Siberian peasant, half monk and half libertine, who exercises his strange hypnotic power over the Russian court in an age of newspapers, telephones and telegraphs.

Mr. Fülöp-Miller has brought together all the evidence he could muster from official documents, police records, and personal letters and diaries to prove that Rasputin was not altogether a devil, but a man composed of many contradictory and opposing elements, whose defects and weaknesses were in a measure outweighed by his simple and lovable qualities. He has not altogether succeeded. Rasputin remains far more the devil than the saint, far more the libertine than the holy starets, and far more the charlatan than the statesman. Even the author makes no attempt to judge the results of his influence, although he well proves how far-reaching and significant it was.

The book gives a dramatic and vivid picture of the life of St. Petersburg and Moscow, the intrigues of society, and the corrupt, unprincipled attitude of officialdom. Against this background Rasputin moves like the creature of some horrible nightmare, alternating between sensual orgies with the women who looked upon him as a saint and found peace in the "sinful encounter", and secret political activities based upon his hold over the Czar and, more especially, the Czarina. The account of Rasputin's life is detailed and substantial. The picture of the Holy Devil is far more realistic than anything that has been published. It is a biography with much of the fascination of its subject, an intense, thrilling story of a man who has no counterpart in history. It is a revelation of an historical character who might have been drawn from the pages of Gorki or Dostoevsky.

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As far as the poles from Rasputin is the character of that American about whom W. E. Woodward writes in *Meet General Grant* (Liveright, $4.00). This careful biography reveals the hero of the Civil War as a rather stupid, untidy man who blundered into fame when the chance of war gave him an opportunity to display the one gift he had, an intuitive military genius. He failed in everything else, in his life before the war as well as in the presidency. But although he was never a great strategist he had flashes of insight denied those with more technical knowledge of warfare, and a stubborn determination which never allowed him to turn back when he had set out upon a campaign.

Mr. Woodward of course is out to give us the whole truth and nothing but the truth, but for all his devastating attack upon legend and myth his book does not revolutionize our knowledge either of Grant or of the Civil War. Too often the legends he girds himself to demolish are dummies. They had long since fallen before other lances. And sometimes his arguments are not altogether convincing nor are the new elements he would introduce into history especially significant. General Grant may have been of a feminine type, a man who could not bear to kill animals, a zoöphile suffering from a psychological escape mechanism; but it is more significant that in his conduct of war he was ready to make any sacrifice to gain his objectives. Yet for one thing we must be thankful. Mr. Woodward has at least preserved the General's big, black cigars.

Grant has not offered Mr. Woodward the chance to be as iconoclastic as he might have wished, for the pedestal on which the General stands is not comparable to that on which we have placed George Washington. He has been brought down somewhat, but there is an obvious sympathy for faults only too apparent.

In his life of Christopher Columbus, *The Discoverer* (Macaulay, $3.00), André de Hevesy has viewed the great mariner as an heroic figure with a strain of mysticism, an idealist with one consuming obsession. But the author's interpretation of the character of Columbus and his later chapters both convey the impression that the discoverer's life might well have ended on that autumn morning in 1492 when the New World was first sighted.

He had realized his dream on that epochal day and the faith, the courage, the stubborn determination which had enabled him to sail into the unknown west were the very qualities which led to his later downfall. He had been so positive that Cathay and Cipangu could be reached by crossing the Atlantic, that when he found land he could not believe it was not the goal he sought. His mind was too fixed to change. And in convincing the Spanish court that his islands were the fabled isles which girdled the dominions of the Great Khan, he aroused hopes of gold and treasure which he could not fulfill. It was inevitable that his good faith should be assailed.

Even more tragic from the historical point of view than Columbus's disgrace is the irony of fate that robbed him in a great measure of his glory. It was a prophetic coincidence which made the last line of the last letter he wrote, "I have sent word to you by Amerigo Vespucci".

M. de Hevesy has written the story of Columbus with dramatic feeling against a colorful background. The character of Columbus stands above reproach. If the close is a little disappointing, the description of Columbus's struggle to gain the means to put his ideas to the test, and the account of the westward voyage as revealed in his own log, are a highly readable addition to the Columbus literature.

John Smith; Man of Adventure, by John Gould Fletcher (Brentano, $3.50), is a poet's biography of this vain, boastful pioneer who wrote such preposterous tales of his own exploits that legend and fact have become inextricably confused. But we do not feel that Mr. Fletcher very clearly distinguishes between the two, nor does he add very much to our understanding of Smith's character.

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FLOWER OF OLD JAPAN

By Conrad Aiken

THE *Tale of Genji,* by Lady Murasaki—which has now, apparently, been completed with the publication of the fourth volume, *Blue Trousers* (Houghton, Mifflin, $3.50)—takes a place with the great "stories" of the world. One says "stories" more or less advisedly. For it is primarily as a story that one reads it: it falls, in a sense, somewhere between the epic and the novel: somewhere between the mere collection of episodes (loosely surrounding the history of one particular hero) and the careful delineation and charting of a character: but it is obviously nearer to the *Odyssey,* or the *Arabian Nights,* than to *Swann's Way.* It is really a compilation of stories, a compilation managed with an extraordinary skill. If Prince Genji is the principal character, and is more often on the stage than off it, there are also (especially in the later chapters of the book) almost as many episodes which do not concern him at all, or only very obliquely. Of at least half a dozen people we get the more or less complete life history. A half century of time is covered, roughly, and in the course of it we are given an astonishingly complete survey of the entire "court" life of the period. The country, of course, is Japan, although no names are mentioned. And incidentally, but importantly, we are presented with as complete a view of Japanese civilization, in the year 1000, as the *Odyssey* and *Iliad* give us of early Greece, or *Beowulf* of early Britain.

This, apart from the story, will be the feature of this remarkable book which will most impress, one imagines, the majority of readers. At a time when our English forbears were just emerging from savagery, two-thirds of a century before the Norman conquest brought Latin refinement to England, Lady Murasaki, in Japan, wrote a masterpiece of fiction in which one of the most striking things is the sophistication and culture of the *milieu* described. Of superstition there is a certain amount of evidence: ghosts, or fox-spirits, figure importantly in several of the death-scenes, for example, and it appears that Lady Murasaki subscribes to the current belief that hate may actually be a destroyer of human life. But of barbarism, unless one is very niggling with one's definitions, there will scarcely be found a trace. This is an extraordinarily civilized society. It is as rich in conventions as the court life of France from 1650 to 1790; and far richer in esthetic conventions than the only parallel in European culture which one easily thinks of—the period of the troubadours. Every courtier was, if one wants to put it invidiously, an esthete. Every man or woman who belonged to the privileged stratum of society had to be an expert in the "forms" of social behavior. Social life was simply a long series of ceremonies, and of the most elaborate description. Every occasion demanded its special form, whether of dress or decorum; and for every encounter, even of the most casual description, the individual was expected to be prompt with a poem improvised for the moment, a poem packed with reference and cross-reference. It is no exaggeration to say that everyone who in the least participated in court life, or who belonged in the remotest degree to the upper classes, had to be an accomplished poet.

In short, one is compelled to accept the Japan of the year 1000 as representing one of the high-water marks of human civilization. It was one of those moments when the genius of a race comes to flower. That very few "great" works of art were produced in Japan in this period—comparable for example to Chinese art in the Sung or Tang dynasties, or to Greek art in the age of Socrates—does not materially alter this fact. It seems simply to have happened that Japanese genius went for the most part into an elaboration of life itself, an elaboration almost to the point of ritual. Was there ever a

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people so conscious, for instance, of the beauty of nature, so steeped in it or so close to it? One doubts it. The whole racial attitude to life was a poetic one: sentimental, perhaps, but none the less exquisite and imaginative in the highest degree.

It is this background that Lady Murasaki gives us for her *Tale of Genji*. And one could not have conceived an author better fitted for her task. It is clear, in Mr. Arthur Waley's admirable translation, that she had a poetic genius of the finest order: for the whole of this enormous four-volume novel is simply soaked, simply opalescent, with poetic beauty. One suspects that in no other single literary work in the world could one find so marvellous and delicate and various an interpretation of every mood of nature. In this world of plum-blossom and dewfall, of frost on the grass-blade and moonlight on the pine-needles, this world in which the peculiar beauty of every season received intimate reverence, Lady Murasaki sets her tale in motion. It has been compared to the Arabian Nights—and in sheer inventive power it is indeed not far behind it. The scene is a crowded one, an extraordinary number of people are deployed for us, the complications are endless: but the author keeps complete control of her complex narrative and manages even the time-element with consummate skill. Not only this, but also, as Mr. Waley points out in his excellent preface to the third volume, *A Wreath of Cloud*, Lady Murasaki has employed contrast, between chapter and chapter or section and section, with a nicety in sense of value for any parallel to which one must go to music. Humor follows and sharpens pathos, the most poignant and searching of realisms alternates with farce, the succinct and graphic gives way to the leisurely reflective or the idyllic. Everything is in its place, nothing is disproportionate, the intricate narrative moves forward as harmoniously as a tone-poem. And gradually we become aware that in addition to the fascination of the tale itself, with all its by-paths and retrogressions and momentary cul-de-sacs of intrigue, we are also in the presence of a series of psychological portraits which are as astonishingly modern as they are unforgettable.

There has, apparently, been some disagreement among the critics as to this matter of Lady Murasaki's "psychology." One critic has maintained that there is more than a mere surface resemblance between Murasaki's compendium and Proust's great "autobiography." Other critics have challenged this assertion, and have felt, rather, that Lady Murasaki gives us a keen psychological perception of "moments," but not of that other and profounder affair which we might vaguely call the "dynamics of character." On the latter point we are accustomed to hearing a great deal of cant: the text-books on the novel are full of it. For example, we are assured again and again that no "character" is worth the name if he doesn't "evolve" under our eyes. We must see him emerge from the chrysalis of some complex, and then, in accordance with the laws of that complex, take a predetermined and inevitable course of development. This strikes the present critic as a very limited view—or at the very least as a view which may lead to serious misunderstandings of the matter. Why should we object to the presentation of a character *a priori*, a character who does *not* especially change or evolve, a character who in a sense remains fixed, except for those minor deviations or modulations which are sufficiently explainable and natural in *any* human being? Why indeed, so long as this character is made vivid and recognizable and identifiably individual for us? And this, precisely, is what Lady Murasaki has done for us. Her "Murasaki" of the novel, Genji's chief concubine, is a patient Griselda of flesh and blood. She is an extraordinarily moving figure, she behaves exactly as we expect her to behave, she dies as we expect her to die. She is a tragic figure as convincing as she is beautiful. Her death, and its effect on Prince Genji, is one of the half dozen great things in the book. Aoi, Genji's first wife, is another figure almost as good; and so is Yugao. These women do not, in any useful sense, "evolve": they are stationary; but they are none the less real for that. We know them and believe in them.

That Murasaki should have made vivid her

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female characters for us is perhaps not so surprising, however, as that she should have given us, in Prince Genji himself, perhaps the most sympathetic and humane and, *ipso facto,* the wisest, portrait of a Don Juan that can be found in literature. Genji is, without exaggeration, one of the great figures given to the world by the art of letters. That a woman should have succeeded in understanding a man of this type is surprising enough; but one would rather naturally have expected such a portrait to be somewhat contemptuous, or grudging, or bitter. Of these things, however, there is here not a trace. Murasaki is in love with Genji, as indeed she is in love with life itself. Never minimizing his weaknesses, making fun of them deliciously, she nevertheless *sees* him perfectly, with the maximum of poetic divination; and she ends by achieving through her creation of him that enhancement of our valuation of the world which is the gift of only the greatest artists.

Of *Blue Trousers,* the final volume of this novel, it is only necessary to say that it is as good as the other three. With the death of Genji's Murasaki (not to be confused with the authoress) and his impending retirement to a monastery, it brings the story to a close on precisely the right note. A life, with all its complexities, has ended. And with its ending we are made to feel, as only the best elements in art or religion can make us feel, that life is incommensurable.

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SIX EUROPEAN NOVELISTS

By Lewis Galantière

MUCH depends upon where the author chooses to put the emphasis. In many of Giovanni Verga's tales of adultery in Sicily, the emphasis is put upon the husband. He is the hero, the straightforward, simple-souled, affectionate husband, who learns of a sudden that his wife has been lying with a neighbor, and cuts the neighbor's heart out. A good man, a good soul, blinded by his sense of honor. Such a man Jeli the herdsman turned out to be; such a murderer decent old Brothpot became. But—shift the emphasis from husband to lover and see what you get, in the title story, in *Cavalleria Rusticana* (Dial Press, $2.50). Here the hero is not husband Alfio; the hero is lover Turiddu. What are we to do now with the theory that husbands (Jeli, Brothpot and others) represent, in Mr. D. H. Lawrence's words, "this human core of naïveté" in contact with evil coming from without? Is the evil from without as pure *qua* evil as their goodness is pure *qua* goodness? Not if the story is about human beings. So Turiddu, who should be pure evil, says to Alfio as they go forth to their duel: "As true as God's above, I know I'm in the wrong and I would let myself be killed. But my old mother got up before I started . . . and I could tell she knew. So as sure as God's above, I'm going to kill you like a dog, so the poor woman shan't cry her eyes out". Take the story of Rosso Malpelo, whose hair was as red as Judas's and his eyes the wickedest in Monserrato, said the neighbors. Write it from their point of view, and what a demon out of hell Malpelo becomes. Write it from the point of view of "the Frog" and what an angel he is. Write of him as he sees himself—but Verga has written it in all three aspects, and the story is a masterpiece.

Herr Jacob Wassermann, as everybody knows by now, is greatly concerned with purity of soul. Indeed, he is a kind of Jewish Dostoievsky, straining to adopt the tone (as he possesses the heart) of a primitive Christian. When I closed *Caspar Hauser* (Liveright, $2.50) I asked myself why Wassermann failed so often in credibility. "The central character of this novel," I said to myself, "is an original and authentic Wassermannian creation. You would know him for such if the book were published anonymously. Many of the secondary characters are well composed—the mayor, the first schoolmaster, and others. But the English Lord, the second schoolmaster, Quandt, the police spy, Hickel—they are so melodramatic, so like symbolic figures of Evil and Ignorance; the great Justice, Feuerbach, is so unbelievably stupid for presumably so keen a master of criminology; so easily hoodwinked! And who hoodwinks him? Not the subtile nobleman, but the dubious Quandt and the brutal policeman, Hickel. And the mysterious stranger who lures Caspar to his death! What a feeble dénouement! . . . No, this is too much to believe." And then, having read the narrative, I turned to the introduction specially written by Herr Wassermann for this edition and learned—that all the characters in the novel are historic, that they have played in life, one hundred years ago, the rôles here assigned to them by Wassermann! And so I was forced to reconsider my position, and to reflect that in a manufactured fiction the great criminologist would have satisfied my banal desire for impeccability; he would have known the weaknesses of his fellow puppets; but the real Feuerbach, who knew Quandt to be learned and honest and respectable, could not know him to be intellectually stubborn; who knew Hickel to be a faithful law officer, could not know him to be vain and brutal and avaricious. In life, no hero is omniscient, no character is all of a piece. In every collection of fairy tales there is the story of the changeling prince, but his fate is never in doubt because we know that the witch or the dragon will in the end be killed.

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But where witch and dragon are flesh and blood, possessed of that human inconsistency which is more potent and subtile than supernatural evil, we have the right to tremble for our hero. Caspar Hauser was a changeling prince, and we tremble for him continuously. Truth is sterner than fiction, and man, in whom sadism is fortified by ignorance, and avarice is self-justified by good intent, is more evil than those genii which know themselves to be evil and can be dissolved into thin air by the sign of the Cross. Perhaps this is the moral of Herr Wassermann's prodigiously interesting although occasionally inchoate mystery. Its horror is almost necessarily authentic, since it is the product of the encounter of an unspotted soul with this world of ours.

There is no horror, because there is no mystery, in Arthur Schnitzler's record of the life of *Theresa* (Simon & Schuster, $2.50), a woman who, in the common phrase, "goes wrong" in her adolescence and leads thereafter a gray monotonous existence as mistress to nearly all the men who successively cast desiring eyes upon her. It is a strange thing that a writer so practised as Schnitzler should be unable to create about this central figure that ambiance of pity which she deserves. Theresa is an agreeable, generous, kindly young woman; she wouldn't hurt a fly; she wills no one evil; she is the first to let others have their way; she asks nothing of life but peace, and is ready to pay for that —as few people are who complain that they find no peace in the world. Yet it doesn't ever matter to the reader that peace comes only when she is killed by her illegitimate son. She has never been specially sympathetic; and her tawdry little adventures have never touched us. There is an element which I suppose must be called loosely intensity, without which great fiction can never be written. That element is entirely absent from Schnitzler's present work, so that in the end we have here a case history. I confess that I prefer Havelock Ellis's: they are shorter and more varied.

In that part of southern Europe which may properly be called literate—I refer of course to France—people speak occasionally (and somewhat slightingly) of *"les brumes du Nord"*. This reference is mainly to Ibsen, for even in France, the land of measure, of the intellectual golden mean, they do not carry literacy to excess, as regards foreign literatures. They mean by these "Northern mists" something like what the English mean when they sniff at the Celtic Twilight,—showing once more that all is, as our lecture audiences have learned from Dr. Durant to say, relative. They mean cloudiness of thought, confusion of aim, inaptitude for clear expression, the rhetorical figure known as the pathetic fallacy. Of this mistiness there is more than enough in the central aim of *The New Temple,* by Johan Bojer (Century, $2.50). It wants more than a love of humanity and an intense but amorphous pantheism to create a new religion and to build up in words the figure of a beloved religious leader. Here Bojer has failed, and I for one should be dissatisfied (as artist) with the thought that sincerity of purpose was my only consolation in this failure. As for the pathetic fallacy, I confess to gagging at it. Bojer's landscape "changes its mood like the mind of man". "It moaned in wind, it laughed in sunshine, it wept in rain, it raged in the snow-storm, and lay there giving birth to mighty forces, good and evil."

The story is of two young people, brother and sister, and of two old people, one dead, who exercise an unlimited influence over them. Louise and Lorentz have been reared by the stern, rich Widow at Bruseth. With Lorentz, the old matriarch could do nothing. He slipped from her fingers and went roaming dreamily over the countryside. She knew this well enough, and made Louise her heiress, Louise whom she had fashioned from childhood into a realist—a young woman of character, practical sense, efficiency (in the engineering, not the theological import of the word). Lorentz was a grown man when he met his impoverished parents, from whom the children had been estranged "for their own good" many years earlier by the great Widow. And his father, a sort of anti-Christian deist, showed Lorentz the stern path he must mount to reach the New Temple, to give his people a new faith. The young man floundered irresolutely for a while and then, by way of spreading the new doctrine, en-

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tered that most revolutionary of folds, the Lutheran Church. I was perhaps a little flippant about the pathetic fallacy. The truth is that the countryside and the farm life in Bojer's Norway are the finest things in his novel, and excellent with them are the characters of Louise, the dead but ever-present Widow, and the estranged parents.

The Women at the Pump (Knopf, $3.00) well describes this latest novel of Knut Hamsun. We have here not a "story" but a day to day narrative of life in a Norwegian fishing town: its notables, its grotesques, its provincial jealousies and delights and catastrophes. I can only explain my absorption in this dull, long work by the fascination which verisimilitude exercises upon us. Every word pronounced, every incident here recounted is so credible—and apparently so purposeless! From time to time Hamsun shakes himself and gives us in a dozen pages a scene of intense loveliness, such as the touching account of peg-leg Oliver bringing home a variety of sweets to his brats. And bit by bit we perceive that the women at the pump know their business, that bit by bit they have built up for us, in their idle chatter, a townful of people many of whom are almost three-dimensional; and they do it, strange to say, without malice, with sometimes a good deal of heart, and always with a decent appreciation of the utility of the individual to their story, which is to say, to their town.

I cannot admire Herr Bruno Frank's *Trenck; the Love-Story of a Favourite* (Knopf, $2.50). It may seem to Herr Frank impudicity to precipitate love into a love-story, or it may be—and this is probably a more reasonable conjecture—that he is unable to write about love. The truth about Herr Franck does not matter, however. What matters is that there is here no lover, no beloved, no love-story, and that I find intolerable. For the rest, I suspect Herr Franck to have been fascinated by Frederick the Great sufficiently to wish to write another book about him, and to have taken the career of Trenck (with whom Frederick's sister was infatuated) as the excuse for such a book. Such a book!

About these books as translations. The best is, it goes without saying, Lawrence's version of the Verga stories. None of them is bad, although the Wassermann comes very near it occasionally, and the experienced translators of Trenck nod several times. Mr. Drake does a good job on the Schnitzler volume, and Mr. Archer does admirably with the flow of Bojer's romantic style.

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A Shelf of Recent Books

THE MAN DICKENS

By Robert M. Gay

THE LIFE OF CHARLES DICKENS. *By John Forster, edited and annotated with an Introduction by J. W. T. Ley. Doubleday, Doran. $5.00.*

CHARLES DICKENS: A BIOGRAPHY FROM NEW SOURCES. *By Ralph Straus. Cosmopolitan. $5.00.*

THIS SIDE IDOLATRY. *By C. E. Bechhofer-Roberts ("Ephesian"). Bobbs-Merrill. $2.50.*

STUDENTS of Dickens have long known the worst of him. Forster did not tell it in his great *Life,* because as a gentleman he could not; but Dickens himself unlocked his heart in at least two public utterances, and was roundly upbraided for doing so, as he deserved to be. And since his death the study of his novels and his life has made quite clear his faults, at any rate those of taste and perhaps of something more. Mr. Ley, in some five hundred and sixteen notes appended to the various chapters of Forster's *Life,* now republished, has gathered all of the materials which were unknown to Forster or suppressed by him, and has given them completely and with a judicial calm worthy of admiration. Any one who wishes to know the facts concerning Dickens's separation from his wife, after twenty-three years of marriage and after the birth of ten children, can now read them here. There is nothing of importance in *This Side Idolatry,* or in Mr. Straus's biography, that is not given in this monumental work.

Mr. Ley carefully distributes the responsibility, declaring that the "whole truth" is that neither was to blame. Mr. Straus permits himself no comment, merely printing what other people said at the time. But Mr. Bechhofer-Roberts's sympathies are all with the woman in the case.

At the time of the publication of the *Address,* in *Household Words,* in which Dickens told the public the story of his domestic troubles, Mrs. Browning expressed the feeling of women: "What is this sad story of Dickens and his wife? Incompatibility of temper, after twenty-three years of married life! What a plea! Worse than irregularity of the passions, it seems to me". Knowing only what she knew, it is a natural and brave comment, and no one can suppose for an instant that she held the prevalent Victorian middle-class view that children—even ten children in sixteen years!—are a blessing or a visitation of providence, to be accepted joyfully or ruefully, without regard to the mother's health and happiness. This seems to have been Dickens's assumption and, for all I know, it was his wife's. Nor could Mrs. Browning have believed in the indissolubility of marriage, however miserable the parties might be. We now know that the pair of whom she wrote had been unhappy for years before the separation came, that Mrs. Dickens had asked for a separate maintenance many times, and that Dickens had put it aside "on account of the children". At least, that is what both Ley and Straus give us to understand.

This Side Idolatry paints another picture, in which the great novelist becomes a very small man—headstrong, excitable, flashy, unreliable, conceited, vulgar, ready to sacrifice everyone for hs career, and thinking only and always of his checks, his royalties, and his dear public. No doubt all of these things were true at times. The idolators of Dickens have always had to ignore a great deal of clay but they have also always remembered that the gold in the rest of him was true gold. We have to take our geniuses as they are, reflecting that if they had been made to our order they might have been admirable, but would probably have been blanks.

The facts, as far as I can judge, were that Dickens was anything but an ideal husband and his Kate anything but a perfect wife. They ought never to have married, as no doubt they early realized; but they

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made a pretty good fight for marital success and were in the end forced to admit defeat. Whatever the truth of the matter, it seems rather small potatoes at this late date to dwell on such private affairs in the life of a man who would now be forgotten if he had not happened to write novels. One grows a little tired of biographies of authors, which omit all consideration of the authors' works; for surely the only Dickens the world cares about is the creator of Sam Weller, Sairy Gamp, Mr. Micawber, Dick Swiveller, and the Marchioness. To leave out of his life the part in which he was creator is like describing a violin without mentioning the strings.

This Side Idolatry is a very entertaining book. A little lacking in style, it still has vivacity and humor, its defects being probably the result of the way in which it was written; for it is really an ingenious mosaic, built up piece by piece, from Forster, from the novels, from letters, from hearsay. It has hardly a sentence which is not traceable to some definite source. It might be supposed that with such faithful accuracy of detail the book would be completely convincing as a whole, but I do not think that it is. There is nothing the author says of Dickens that we can deny, but there is so much that he does not say that his portrait seems to me to end in caricature.

Mr. Straus's biography can be recommended to those who wish to acquire in brief space and without disillusionment the facts, old and recently discovered, about Dickens. It is a condensation of Forster and Ley, written with love and enthusiasm. Mr. Ley's edition of Forster is, as I have said, monumental. Some readers may think that the addition of ninety pages of notes in small print to a book that already contained eight hundred and fifty is scriptural measure with a vengeance. All one can reply is that for the lover of Dickens there is hardly a note that is not interesting. As for Forster, what a book his is! Mr. Ley makes an excellent point, not recognized as it should be, when he says: "The Dickensian's shelves contain many volumes of criticism. In which of those volumes is a higher, saner level reached than in this one? Of course, Forster is sympathetic, yet he is always balanced, and he is always detached—a very high tribute in view of his peculiar position. It is rather surprising that the critical chapters in this biography have never been published as a separate volume. If that were done, I am certain the book would be acclaimed as the best of its kind".

MISS MILLAY IN A RIPER MOOD

By Margaret Wallace

THE BUCK IN THE SNOW. *By Edna St. Vincent Millay. Harper, $2.00.*

EDNA ST. VINCENT MILLAY'S first volume of poems in five years is likely to be received with mixed feeling by her large and somewhat various following. To the academic few whose interest in poetry is chiefly technical, *The Buck in the Snow* affords a mine of thrilling and fruitful speculation. For those who were captured by the beauty and the rich, natural color of *The Harp Weaver* there is here a sincere, reticent beauty of an uncommon order. But those who were satisfied with the simpler and more obvious music of her earlier lyrics are likely to be disappointed in this. *The Buck in the Snow* is a departure from the Edna St. Vincent Millay tradition, both in manner and content. It is a departure predicted, but not necessarily promised, by the intricately patterned verse of *The King's Henchman.* Whatever may be said otherwise, this volume represents growth, and growth, for a poet of Miss Millay's caliber, is advancement. She has fulfilled, in part, at least, the passionate promise of an earlier sonnet:

"Say what you will, and scratch my heart to find
The roots of last year's roses in my breast;
I am as surely riper in my mind
As if the fruit stood in the stalls confessed."

Technically speaking, Miss Millay gets

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her newer effects by a complicated use of internal rhyme, by adroit subordination of the minor syllables in a line and a heterodox indifference to their precise number, and by a cadenced beat which is at variance with what we regard as normal stress-accent. As far as poetry is concerned, such considerations are largely academic nonsense. They will continue to be nonsense until someone solves, once and for all, the metrical paradox of the English language. What does matter is that Miss Millay gets the effect. The beauty of these poems is not to be savored in a second, nor can their meaning be read at a glance. As the form leads one at each successive reading to the perception of a deeper beauty hidden in the breathing cadence of the line, so the meaning tantalizes and beckons one on by the suggestion of deeper implication hidden in the restrained and graceful figure. The difficult and successful image of the verse called "Mist in the Valley" is an instance:

"These hills beneath the October moon,
Sit in the valley white with mist
Like islands in a quiet bay,

Jut out from shore into the mist,
Wooded with poplar dark as pine,
Like points of land into a quiet bay.

(Just in that way
The harbour met the bay)

Stricken too sore for tears,
I stand, remembering the islands and the
sea's lost sound . . .
Life at its best no longer than the sand-
peep's cry,
And I two years, two years,
Tilling an upland ground!"

The subject matter of *The Buck in the Snow* is limited. Miss Millay evinces at every turn a preoccupation with death—the death of friendship and the death of love, and, more intensely, the death of life. There is nothing in the expression of this preoccupation to compare with the treatment of death in her younger work. There she was more than half in love with death, which presented itself as a beautiful unreality, enhancing by its shadow the fugitive beauty of life. Here she evokes a grimmer beauty, an unrelieved beauty of life set over against the harsh reality of death. The title poem strikes the predominant note of the book:

"White sky, over the hemlocks bowed with
snow,
Saw you not at the beginning of evening
the antlered buck and his doe
Standing in the apple orchard? I saw
them. I saw them suddenly go,
Tails up, with long leaps lovely and slow,
Over the stone-wall into the wood of hem-
locks bowed with snow.

Now lies he here, his wild blood scalding
the snow.

How strange a thing is death, bringing to
his knees, bringing to his antlers
The buck in the snow.
How strange a thing,—a mile away by
now, it may be,
Under the heavy hemlocks that as the
moments pass
Shift their loads a little, letting fall a
feather of snow—
Life, looking out attentive from the eyes
of the doe.

The work of this volume is surprisingly uneven, in view of its general maturity. Miss Millay has included a good deal of material foreign, hitherto, to her peculiar talents, which her mood is not always strong enough to sustain. Sometimes, indeed, she comes periously near to pathos, as in the concluding stanza of the poem "On First Having Heard the Skylark". However, its importance goes without saying, not only for its present performance, but for its promise of future achievement.

BEVERIDGE'S LINCOLN

By Allan Nevins

ABRAHAM LINCOLN 1809-1858. *By Albert J. Beveridge. Houghton Mifflin. Two vols. $12.50.*

WE have in Albert J. Beveridge's *Abraham Lincoln: 1809-1858* one of the lamentable fragments of American biographical literature. The author had intended to bring the first part of his great biography

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down to the inauguration of Lincoln in 1861. His pen stopped as he neared the close of his account of the Lincoln-Douglass debates to 1858; and an unnamed hand, understood to be Worthington C. Ford's, has supplied a succinct final chapter. There are evidences that the latter part of Mr. Beveridge's work would have been condensed and polished had he lived. Nevertheless, even in its incomplete form it is one of the most impressive works of its kind yet produced in America. With indefatigable research, with care that no detail be lost, with entire absence of bias, and with a judgment upon conflicting evidence which seldom slips, the author has given us our best history of Lincoln's formative period. It is only to be regretted that he could not have lived to add an equally massive, thorough, and impartial survey of the far more difficult years of the Civil War.

The book accomplishes two great objects. It proves that, overwhelming as is the literature upon Lincoln, research can still find new facts, some of them of primary importance. It demonstrates also that when candidly exhibited, the facts new and old demolish the Lincoln legend as many have suspected it could be demolished. Mr. Beveridge is the most objective of historians. He believes that "the facts when justly arranged interpret themselves", and that "for this purpose a little fact is as important as what is called a big fact". He has examined the great mass of Weik-Herndon manuscripts as nobody else has ever done, has for the first time given the Illinois press and the Illinois legislative journals minute scrutiny, and has visited sites in the Illinois country and sifted every document and tradition. In these 1300 pages, heavy with footnotes, we have the final verdict upon such moot questions as the character of Nancy Hanks ("uncommonly intelligent", "inordinately kind and affectionate"), Lincoln's courtship of Ann Rutledge (a singularly cool affair on both sides), his supposed attacks of "insanity" (merely deep melancholia springing from extreme sensitiveness or tender-mindedness), the character of Mary Todd Lincoln (Mr. Beveridge endorses Herndon's term "wildcat"), and the effect upon Lincoln of his Eastern contacts as Congressman in 1847-48 (Mr. Beveridge emphasizes the lesson in oratory which Seward gave him). In these two volumes there is also a wealth of new material upon pioneer life, Western development, and the course of national politics.

The Lincoln legend, which Lincoln himself would have been the first to deprecate and which only obscures his true fame, has been reared mainly on the foundation of the ten-volume eulogy by Nicolay and Hay. It is interesting to note how Mr. Beveridge cuts back through the mass of deification to the much-abused Life by Herndon, much of which it rehabilitates. He dispels one fable after another. Among them are the fable that Lincoln was painfully honest—for he was careless in business and had several debt-judgments proved against him in court; the fable that as a lawyer he was a marvel of mental lucidity—"his mind worked slowly, he had to have plenty of time to think out courses of action and did poorly when hurried"; that he was a man of unfailing political sagacity —his "spot" resolutions at the outbreak of the Mexican War were a sore tactical blunder. The picture which Mr. Beveridge draws for us is of a callow, indolent, brooding youth whose development was in some ways extremely slow; an erratic young man whose nature, remarkably sensitive and fine, was nevertheless marred by some very coarse streaks; a mature lawyer who was superstitious, offensively ribald, a lover alike of childish amusements and the best in literature, with cataclysmic alternations of glee and melancholy; and above all, a man whose taciturnity on all matters of deep import has made him an eternal mystery. Mr. Beveridge quotes approvingly Herndon's remark that "Lincoln is unknown and possibly always will be". But he emphasizes as well the fact that Lincoln had no dash, no gallantry of spirit; that as a political leader he was slow in finding himself, and did not definitely emerge until the middle of the fifties.

It is this political emergence of Lincoln which, in the light of Mr. Beveridge's exhaustive documentation, forms the most dramatic part of the book. So little was he awake in 1845 to the looming issues of the day that he then wrote he was "never much

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interested in the Texas question". He gave offence in 1848 in Massachusetts by attacking the abolitionists: "We have a few in Illinois, and we shot one the other day". In 1849 he favored restriction of slavery in the District of Columbia, but supported the more effective pursuit of fugitive slaves there, a course which led the loose-tongued Wendell Phillips to stigmatize him years later as "the slave-hound of Illinois". In the campaign of 1852 he took but a lukewarm part and his attacks on Douglas elaborately ignored the rising slavery question. Only in 1854 does the real Lincoln begin to appear. On October 4th of that year he made a speech in Springfield which, as Mr. Beveridge says in his elaborate summary, contained all the ideas, or the germs of them, that he expressed thereafter up to the time of the Emancipation Proclamation. There was still hesitancy and irresolution; but Lincoln had gained a grip on both his convictions and his abilities, and in the great debates with Douglas in 1858 he stood revealed to the country as one of its foremost statesmen.

Here is the real Lincoln; nothing idealized, nothing extenuated or set down in malice; a smaller man apparently at one time than Douglas, whose stature Mr. Beveridge makes really imposing; but in the end, by his greatness of heart and his clear perception of the moral aspects of the slavery issue, standing forth as an illustrious national leader.

THE WORLD OF MR. BEERBOHM

By Philip Littell

A Variety of Things. *By Max Beerbohm. Knopf, $3.00.*

IS there any one book which deserves to be called the best that Max Beerbohm ever wrote? Such a question cannot be answered until posterity has had a chance to say its say. Fortunately for us, Mr. Beerbohm's contemporaries, we do not have to decide. All we need to know, whenever he publishes anything, is easily told. *A Variety of Things* contains examples of "periods" more widely separated in time than any other book of his—two fairy tales, 1897; "a memoir of a friend", Aubrey Beardsley, 1898; The Spirit of Caricature, an essay, 1901; another essay, A Stranger in Venice, 1906; A Social Success, produced by George Alexander, 1913; The Guerdon, a parody of Henry James, 1916; "a tribute to" an "imaginary friend, who is still living (or was so six years ago)", 1922; Not That I Would Boast, "a memoir of two imaginary friends", 1927.

Mr. Beerbohm has not dated his "fantastic moral tale", The Dreadful Dragon of Hay Hill. Its scene is laid on the site of what is now London. Its time is thirty-nine thousand years before Christ. It tells what danger befell "the homelanders", how they acted while the danger lasted, and how much less they liked labor and responsibility, once the danger was past, than before it came: "Freedom was all. And, as having special measure of vital force, especially were youths and maidens intent of making the most of their freedom. Their freedom was their religion; and, as every religion needs rites, they ritualistically danced. They danced much during the day, and then much by moonlight or starlight or firelight, in a grim and purposeful, an angular and indeflexible manner, making it very clear that they were not to be trifled with". Either the latest thing in *A Variety of Things*, one's guess would be, or next to the latest.

It amuses Mr. Beerbohm to know that he has American readers, that dealers in first editions find in America a market for his books. "I am a quiet and unexciting writer," he says. "Nevertheless, it seems that there are in the vast, reverberating and roaring expanses of the United States some people calm enough and patient enough to read me." Here the mistakes are two. Mr. Beerbohm is not an unexciting writer and his readers are not patient. They do not need patience. All they need is a liking for the companionship of a writer who has an eye for the comedy and the beauty of this world, and who often sees these two things as one thing. All that Mr. Beerbohm's readers need is an interest in sincerity, caricature, good sense, irony, wit, design; in the dexterity—partly

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just dexterity, partly a "shaping spirit of imagination"—with which these other qualities take each its right place in his design.

Mr. Beerbohm's readers are interested also in his personality. "Once again," Virginia Woolf says in *The Common Reader,* "we have an essayist capable of using the essayist's most proper but most dangerous and delicate tool. He has brought personality into literature, not unconsciously and impurely, but so consciously and purely that we do not know whether there is any relation between Max the essayist and Mr. Beerbohm the man." We do not know, it is bad manners to guess, we cannot help trying to make guesses. We may feel sure that Mr. Beerbohm is urbane in his private life, that his urbanity is often a means to caricature, that he is generous of praise, that he uses words so as to make them give out a forgotten or an unsuspected virtue. We should like to know but cannot even guess, whether his more private world is as unmysterious, as unpuzzling, as the world he chooses to show us.

Another thing I should like to be told is why, though his drawing has grown more and more beautiful, his writing was beautiful from the first. What prose it has been and is! How light is every sentence, how firm! What wit in the avoidance of the rhythm which we have been led to expect, and in exchange for which we get a rhythm more surprising, malicious! Will posterity be dull enough to think, if it calls such prose "mannered", that it has said anything to the purpose? Of course a time may come when, to the unhappy children of that time, no prose will be readable except such as they hear from one another. But that time, in a country where Mr. Max Beerbohm's readers increase and collectors of his first editions compete, is happily not yet.

A CLEAR SIGHT FOR SAVOYARDS

By Marcia Clarke

THE STORY OF GILBERT AND SULLIVAN. *By Isaac Goldberg. Simon & Schuster. $5.00.*

OVERCOME neither by the immensity of his subject, nor by his great personal affection for it, Isaac Goldberg has written *The Story of Gilbert and Sullivan* in commanding clearness and simplicity. A generation to whom the operettas have meant little but yawning sessions at amateur theatricals owes a considerable debt to Mr. Goldberg and to Mr. Winthrop Ames. Between them, they have brought alive, shorn of Victorian glamour, the naïve charm, the improbable extravagance, the Topsy-turviness of Gilbert's world, performing their miracle with the precise, unemotional fingers of modern surgeons.

Mr. Goldberg has written with balance, restraint, and true intellectual perspective. He is never lost in blind admiration for the collaborators or their work; he remains their severest critic, while their warmest friend. He emphasizes the faults which kept both Gilbert and Sullivan from reaching eternal heights. Present-day performances of their work can never impress as anything other than revivals; none of the operettas has the immortal continuity of true opera. Neither, it is true, have the light operas of other composers; from Offenbach to Victor Herbert one feels the same outmodedness of book and music; but Gilbert and Sullivan have so long been conceded to be the gods of the nineteenth-century musical theatre that enthusiastic Savoyards are reluctant to see them in their true light. What that light is, Mr. Goldberg sees clearly: "Transition figures they were, in an age of transition, caught between the personal independence of the artist and the social imperatives of their station. They did not cross over into the new day, though they served as a footbridge for others". . . .

From the opening chapters, parallel portraits of the lives and backgrounds of the two men, through the central body of the book, in which they are caught up and swept to glory under the ægis of D'Oyly Carte, through the chapters—again parallel—dealing with the quarrel and the break, on to the final analyses of the two identities, the book is a technical triumph. There is small variety of style and treatment; of each operetta the author recites the synopsis, the original cast, and the length and success of the run.

One feels grateful to him for his dispas-

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sionate analysis of Gilbert's plots, with his exposition that Gilbert suffered from lack of originality. With the whole panorama of operettas spread out, the similarity of the plots is oppressive, just as they became intolerably oppressive to Sullivan, who begged for a release from Topsy-turvydom and the eternal lozenge. Gilbert's two sources of inspiration were his Bab Ballads, and the varied experiences of his own life. "Gilbert", says Mr. Goldberg, "passing from work to work, was as one who strolled through a hall of mirrors."

One is almost afraid that Mr. Goldberg, loyal Savoyard that he is, will worship and bow down before Sullivan as a Great English Composer. Far to the contrary, his sober estimate of Sullivan as a musician is accurate, and, if grievous to some, totally just. Sullivan was not a great composer. He was not a great religious composer, and his operetta scores lacked too many elements—chiefly those related to passion—of dramatic greatness. He was what he was, sometimes a musical opportunist, sometimes a man hovering on the edge of inspiration. He was the master of the light touch, thinking chiefly in terms of rhythm and melody.

In his portrayals of the two men as humans and as personalities, Mr. Goldberg retains his detached skill and his cool penetration. He writes of them to leave the truth in the mind—and in the heart—that Gilbert was quarrelsome, disagreeable, unsocial, a maker of enemies; that Sullivan was gentle, lovable, the adored of society and the Court, a maker of friends. One does not choose between them, but one loves Sullivan the more, though he, too, was capable of wrong.

The book is crammed with source material and accurate information. To it is appended an excellent Gilbert and Sullivan bibliography, and, surprise and delight, numbers of the Bab Ballads, reprinted from the files of *Fun*, and never available before. It is a rich book, richly and judiciously written; more than a biography, more than a commentary, more than a history; a labor of sapiently well-tempered love.

GLIMPSES OF VICTORIAN AMERICA

By Frank Parker Stockbridge

MEMORIES OF A SCULPTOR'S WIFE. *By Mrs. Daniel Chester French. Houghton Mifflin. $5.00.*

"I SEEM always to have basked in someone else's reflected glory," writes Mrs. French. "For years of my youth I was Harry French's sister. Then, after many years, I was Dan French's wife, and after a still longer period, when I dined out, I was sometimes greeted by the query, 'Are you Peggy French's mother?'"

Between the covers of her book she stands revealed as Mary French in her own right, as keenly sensitive and perceptive an artist in her own medium as is her distinguished cousin and husband in his. Seldom does a first book disclose a quality of literary craftsmanship which gives to each episode and incident precisely the weight and flavor which it ought to bear. There are passages of vivid description in Mrs. French's book so cameo-clear that the most casual reader pictures the scene, in form and color, with no mental effort; and these are achieved with that scrupulous economy of material which is the essence of all good art.

From the Washington of Lincoln's day to the Sicily of today, these sharply-etched vignettes disclose the customs and life of the time and place; the simply-democratic Concord of Emerson and the Alcotts, the stark ruggedness of Puritan Chester, ancestral home of the French family, the New York of the "gay nineties", the Paris of Bouguereau and of Rodin, the rural charm of old Stockbridge in the Berkshires; each is shown in a fresh light, its famous men and women in unhackneyed characterizations.

It is the pithy anecdotes crowding the book which give these *Memories* their undeniable charm. The most casual Jack Horner can stick a thumb in anywhere with the certainty of pulling out a delectable plum. Lincoln himself (though the memories of a little child begin with the tidings of his as-

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sassination), Kate Chase Sprague, Roscoe Conkling, Blaine, Mrs. Cleveland as a White House bride, a dozen other Washington notables figure in these pages, with Ralph Waldo Emerson and his daughter, Bronson Alcott and *his* gifted daughters, a host of literary and artistic figures of the later Victorian era and the present century. Here are George Kennan, Mrs. Burnett, Oscar Wilde, Paderewski, Isadora Duncan, Duse, Mark Twain, Richard Watson Gilder, Joseph H. Choate, Frank Millet, Peary, Mme. Homer, Judge Roar, a hundred others who live in these pages, each tagged with some newly-told and usually sprightly incident.

Running like a golden thread through the book there is, of course, the sculptor himself. Here, again, Mrs. French has achieved an artistic triumph. She has drawn Daniel Chester French with wifely discernment and affection, but so objectively as to create a true, uncolored picture of the creator of the Concord "Minute Man" and the Washington "Lincoln". Emerson himself had commissioned the "Minute Man" when Dan French was only twenty-one and President Grant had attended its unveiling "by the rude bridge that arched the flood". It is evident that his wife, if not the sculptor himself, regards his heroic "Lincoln" in the Lincoln Memorial at Washington, as his greatest work. He was seventy when this largest of all marble statues was finished; since then he has done several other pieces and at seventy-eight past he is at work on the George Westinghouse Memorial!

Memories of a Sculptor's Wife is the record of the life of a great artist and a great gentleman, revealed rather by his backgrounds, cultural and chronological, than as a sharply-drawn figure, and so, perhaps, the more truly revealed as one of the last remaining fruits of that Puritan stock which flowered at Concord into the tradition which still measurably dominates American art and letters.

H. GlintenKamp

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NEW BOOKS FOR CHILDREN

By Henry Beston

THERE is a boojumish side to Nature, and one of the first problems which besets a writer for children is the extent to which that boojumish world may enter into a story. Before I go on, however, perhaps I had better define the term "boojumish". I don't mean the grim side of Nature; I mean the sort of thing that scares you when you go walking home at night through a wood. Once upon a time, after having lived in the open country of Cape Cod, I went walking through a primeval wood in northern Maine, and as I came down the lonely lane, under a cloudy roof of branches which hid the stars, as I passed the dark walls of the massed trees, the trees and the boojums in the trees, I remember, became positively malevolent. Trees are all right in the daytime, but deliver me from them at night. An old New England friend once said to me oracularly: "Trees hate people". I hope it's not as bad as that. Though I resent anything in a story for children which might tend to create new fears, I do feel, nevertheless, that the boojumish side of Nature is perfectly fair material. It exists, and children adjust themselves pretty well to what exists.

What I particularly don't like is the boojumish side of things which doesn't exist. I don't like horrible old superstitions dragged out of folk tales; I don't like hideous old blood-drinking witches, and ogres who put great hairy hands into home-made cages to see whether the children are fattening or perversely staying thin. This false boojumish world is dead to us today as never before, and since it is dead, it might as well be buried. Only values of beauty would validly keep it living, and most of the false boojum world is corrupt with cruelty and ugliness.

I have been brought to this beginning by reading a book on the autumn list. It is called: *The Jolly Tailor,* a collection of Polish fairy tales translated by Lucia M. Borski and Kate B. Miller (Longman's, Green, $2.00). Now folk tales were originally told by grown-ups to grown-ups, and whenever I come upon a book of folk tales re-cooked for children, I read it carefully to see what the editors have done to the primitive and adult material. I find a story in this book concerned with a witch's attempt to steal a young girl; to further her design, the witch changes into a bird, a young hunter then shoots the bird, and I read that as the arrow struck in, black blood spouted from the witch's breast. This is good, vivid folk tale, right enough; yet I cannot say that I would care to have this ugly little picture become part of the consciousness of a modern child. Turning to Miss Frances Jenkins Olcott's *Wonder Tales from Baltic Wizards* (Longman's, Green, $2.00), I unearth a story called "The Giant Who Did Not Like Bones". This has to do with an ogre whom captive children tricked by starving themselves thin. Now I do not want to be unpleasant with Miss Olcott's book, for she has a spirited knack of telling a good story and of choosing a good story, but I must say that I wish she would be a little more discriminating with her material. Why not leave out all cannibalistic repasts? I have always felt it a pity that the story of the old blood-drinking hag was included in so readable and original a collection of stories as *Tales from Pirate Isles.*

After all, the great fairy tales of the world are not so much folk tales as literary tales. One of the loveliest is *The White Cat,* by Mme. d'Aulnoy. It is pleasant to be able to announce that Macmillan's are publishing a special de luxe edition of the story with illustrations by Miss Elizabeth MacKinstry ($3.00). Another delightful book is *Caleb and the Friendly Animals,* by Albert L. Webster (Duffield, $2.00), one of the most wholesome, charming and amusing books of the year. It tells of a little boy who dis-

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covers a valley of animals that have remained on friendly terms with each other, even as before the fall from Eden. There is nothing goody-goodish either about the story or the atmosphere of its writing, and, moreover, the real animals and imaginary ones are all scrambled together in a most amusing manner. Those who appreciate new ideas and illustrations will do well to look at Mr. Webster's work. His picture of an over-heated and benevolent dragon cooling off in a pond is one of the very best things of the year. The book is suitable for children of any and all ages. Another pleasant tale about animals is *Little Dog Toby,* written and illustrated by Rachel Field (Macmillan, $1.00). The book belongs in the *Little Library* series, and does honor to an already distinguished list. *Rocky Billy,* by Holling Clancy Holling, illustrations by the author (Macmillan, $2.00), has a pleasant background of American nature—the Rocky Mountain country—and concerns itself with an American beast. *Boga, the Elephant,* by Baroness Dombrowski (Macmillan, $2.50), gives a good picture of the life of a baby elephant in Africa. A new Mukerji is on the list, *Ghond, the Hunter* (Dutton, $2.50), and all who respect Mr. Mukerji's qualities of sincerity and deep feeling will find this new story to their taste. Children will find an amusing Arabian Nights donkey in *Abdallah and the Donkey,* by Baroness Dombrowski—this again from Macmillan, $2.00—whilst youngsters with a nose for natural history will find an excellent introduction to pelagic wonders in Edith Howes's *Sandals of Pearl* (Morrow, $2.00), in which a magic amulet permits the children to visit underseas.

Now for poetry and picture books. My favorite picture book of the year is *Millions of Cats,* by Wanda Gág (Coward-McCann, $1.25). The story is very slight—it concerns itself with the adventures of an old couple who wanted a cat—but the amusing pictures give the book its wings. Other good picture books are *The Picture Book of Travel,* by Berta and Elmer Hader (Macmillan, $2.00); the text of this book is perhaps just a little heavy for children, but the pictures in the poster style are just what they want. Then there is *The Wonderful Locomotive,* by Cornelia Meigs (Macmillan, $2.00), pictures again by the Haders. There's a fearsome kind of small child loose in today's world who thrives on engines from the age of two, and this book should go to his heart. The Hader pictures for this book are particularly good. Janet Smalley's *Rice to Rice Pudding* (Morrow, $1.75)—she might have chosen a better title—has good pictures of the manner in which various household things are grown and prepared for us. *Magic Journeys,* by Mary Graham Bonner (Macaulay, $2.50), is a geographical picture book, and a child, as I understand it, is to get his notions of continents and such by being introduced to them in person. Were I "Junior"—to quote Mr. Benchley—I must say that all these pictures of continents with faces and hands and more teeth than is good for them would utterly confuse me.

The year has brought forth some particularly good verse. Pamela Bianco has gathered together her favorite selections from Blake and illustrated them with her charming fancies. She calls her collection *The Land of Dreams* (Macmillan, $2.00). A delicate and aristocratic thing. *Cursory Rhymes,* by Humbert Wolfe (Doubleday, Doran, $2.00), alas, never quite gets over the fence between childhood and maturity; it even sits on the fence with difficulty. *All About Me,* by John Drinkwater (Houghton Mifflin, $2.00), is more successful. *Menagerie,* a book of verses about animals, by Mary Britton Miller (Macmillan, $1.75), has exceptionally vivid qualities. Few books that I know reveal a keener knowledge of the ways and manners of living animals. As poetry, however, the verse has but little singing quality. *The Children Sing in the Far West,* by Mary Austin (Houghton Mifflin, $2.00), has some fine things in it, among them some particularly good poetic settings of Indian tribal songs. It is a book for parents and children to read together, rather than a book for children to read by themselves.

I do not find an over-large selection of narratives for young people. *Dr. Doolittle's Journey to the Moon,* by Hugh Lofting

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(Stokes, $2.50), is regrettably thin—the very bottom of the pail. *The House at Pooh Corner* (Dutton, $2.00) is a better success as a sequel, the fun in it being even more delightful than the fun in Mr. Milne's first book, *Winnie-the-Pooh.*

Other good books, most of them narratives for older boys and girls: the knightly cycle of Old France is one of the best and most chivalrous of European literary heritages, and in *The Knights of Charlemagne,* by Ula W. Echols (Longman's, Green, $3.00), the old legends are capably retold. Another particularly good story for boys is *The Short Sword,* by Violet M. Irwin (Macmillan, $1.75, which deals with the adventures of a Chinese boy. What an extraordinary gift Miss Irwin has of taking hold of far away material and making it live for us! *Magic Gold,* by Marian Lansing (Little, Brown, $2.00), is a good straight-forward narrative of a boy of noble birth who worked with a medieval alchemist attached to his father's retinue. An older boy will like *The Derelict,* a story of the South Seas, by Charles Nordhoff (Little, Brown, $2.00). Mr. Nordhoff knows the islands as few do in his generation, and moreover, he writes with real distinction. Another good story is *Clearing Weather,* by Cornelia Meigs, (Little, Brown, $2.00). *Billy Barnicoat,* by Greville MacDonald, is followed this year by its sequel *Count Billy* (Dutton, $2.50), really a fine piece of work; a true novel for boys. Mr. Hawthorne Daniel, whose *Ships of the Seven Seas* I shall always consider the best available modern book on ships, has written a "jim-dandy" story for young people, called *The Seal of the White Buddha* (Coward-McCann, $2.00). Mr. Daniel tells of a New England girl who goes to China in a clipper ship of the '40s. Girls like adventure books these days, and this yarn is one of the very best I have seen for years. The atmosphere of the sailing ship era is particularly well sketched in.

All in all, the list is a good one, and it is pleasant to see how much intelligent attention is given to the editing and manufacture of books for children.

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NOVICES AMONG THE NOVELISTS

By Ralph S. Bailey

READING a first novel with a view to discovering and exploiting its essential characteristics is very much like rearing a child. Sometimes it is as difficult; occasionally it is as pleasant; but occasionally it is both.

Mr. L. Steni (for Steni read Stein, brother to the more famous Gertrude) may be judged seriously mainly for the vigor with which he has brought pen and paper together. That Mr. Steni's volume is "difficult" becomes apparent early in its pages.

Perhaps one may consider praiseworthy the consistency with which he has adhered to the rhythm of his piece. From beginning to end, the *Prelude to a Rope for Meyer* (Dial Press, $2.50) measures its way with a steadily increasing momentum and a regularly leaping crescendo. If the final chord jangles a bit, lay it to overworked strings rather than lack of harmonious intent. In the final perspective, however, Mr. Steni's novel is just one more illustration of what may happen when a young writer endeavors to bridge the stream of consciousness with nothing more serviceable than foolscap. Lucas Meyer rings false from the first page to the last. He is merely a lay figure whom Mr. Steni inspires to thoughts and actions which no human being could compass. As the title suggests so uncompromisingly, the story concerns those events which precede what we are left to assume will be a hanging —Lucas Meyer's hanging for the strangulation of his mistress. That's the essence of the book. The details concern the various ways in which a waspish trull drives Meyer to the last desperation after unhinging his mind and lacerating him physically on two separate occasions—once by slashing his cheek with her hand-bag and once by biting his ear. The author's style matches his mood. It makes its way crazily from figure to figure and from simile to simile. That it is compact and hearty fails to mitigate the curse proper. It is to be feared that Mr. Steni must wait for that second chance which the zeal of American publishers is wont to supply for those who are persistent enough. Lucas Meyer would best be left at the end of his rope.

Some of the same pitfalls which undo Mr. Steni beset Mr. T. Bowyer Campbell as well. In themselves they are not alarming; for most authors have survived them if they have survived at all. For one thing, Mr. Campbell's style is, if possible, even more far-flung in its pungency than Mr. Steni's. Seeking evidently for the clarity and force of lean prose, Mr. Campbell has overdone it a bit—chiefly by reason of that very pardonable impulse to keep his narrative moving.

Pace is essential in any novel which does not content itself with the depths of characterization, and certainly no one could accuse *Black Sadie* (Houghton Mifflin, $2.50) of even the gentlest spiritual deeps. What she does possess is a readiness for any and all circumstance, and adaptability, which is the essential tolerance of her race sharpened by a sort of intuitive cunning and abetted by a total lack of any save the most obvious moral scruples. Bred of "cornfield nigger" stock, raised in the promiscuity of plantation surroundings, migrating to the North to vindicate a combined curiosity and gullibility, remaining there when she found herself suddenly the topmost fleck of foam on that great "new Negro" wave which swept out of Harlem in the years before the late war, Sadie presents a personality which could have been either made brilliant or stupid by an observant and ordinarily intelligent writer. Being keenly senstive to the vagaries of humanity, being something more than merely intelligent, and possessing a very convincing familiarity with the people of whom he writes, Mr. Campbell makes Sadie a curiously vibrant figure—curiously, because Sadie herself never seems to realize her pos-

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sibilities. All these factors, of course, are part and parcel of good authorship, and but for the intangible elements of this skill we should not have the tangible. One reason why Mr. Campbell succeeds where Mr. Steni and so many of his fellows fail is because he has first of all found a character worthy of her destiny. The Stenis will continue indefinitely to work out fervid destinies and then struggle for three hundred pages to concoct characters to fit. It simply cannot be done. It is perfectly apparent that the grotesque shadow of the scaffold fell on Mr. Steni's page long before Lucas Meyer put in an appearance. Black Sadie, on the other hand, has been the queen of Harlem for a long time before the final turn that sends her back to the cornfield from whence she came. "Easy come, easy go, niggers", concludes Mr. Campbell philosophically.

Where these first two novels may be legitimately compared, at least on such points as concern technique, execution, and general temper, *Heritage* (Knopf, $2.50) must be placed in a category of its own. It is quite impossible to judge Miss Rose C. Feld upon the basis of her first showing, for the book bears few of the thumb-prints of the novice. It would be unjust, as well, to find in such merits as *Heritage* possesses the conventional "promise" which has eased the path of many a reviewer—and damned many an ambitious author. *Heritage* stands straightly upon its own excellences and requires no apology whatever. With a gentleness seldom found in the company of such fixed purpose Miss Feld undertakes to tell her story. She seems to realize at once that she has a difficult task ahead, but not once does she lose sight of her objective. This the reader, too, realizes, although foreseeing only in its bitter potentialities the completeness of the last frustration. The book is really the saga of three generations of New Hampshire farmers. Joel and Sara Wetherby are the first: Sara not only completes the first but overshadows the last to boot. Hers is the personality that dominates the gray and rocky desolation of the Wetherby farmstead, that dominates the husband, the son, and the grandson who are rooted in spite of themselves in the stubborn soil. To Sara the few stony acres passed down from father to son are fertile fields for her dominion. They are the reason for her marriage to the credulous and patient Joel; they lead her to devise the cunning snare which shall hold her eldest son to the farm—and to her—after Joel is gone, and shall hold his son when the time comes. For her pitiful sceptre she pays dearly in incessant toil. But as the farm is her soul, so are the rocks and the weary trees and the drab house—and the labor that must be lavished upon them.

Miss Feld has not overdrawn her character: those who know the back country of New England will recognize Sara Wetherby at once. But if the author has not overdrawn, certainly she offers no relief. The pettiness, the frantic selfishness of Sara; the weary submission of her men and her son's wife—these are things which grind steadily and without mercy into the reader's consciousness.

Not till the end do we discover the apprehended irony of the book, however. Sara has taken death as hard as she had taken life. For a moment the curse is lifted; but for a moment only—for though the one struggle is over, the second is even now going on. "There was a new timbre in Ernest's voice and in the next room there was no silent figure sitting at the window. And yet, it was not different. Upstairs there was a silent figure, waiting."

Not to disparage Miss Feld does one recall Mrs. Wharton's *Ethan Frome*. On the contrary, there is a richness which even the maturity of Mrs. Wharton's novel cannot surpass. And no less surely has Miss Feld understood the soil of which her characters are a part than did Mrs. Wharton the seamy pastures of the Massachusetts uplands. Upon both writers has been borne in that strange fatalism which governs those who labor in the Earth with their hands. We find it in *Heritage;* looking back we found it in *Ethan Frome;* looking ahead we see inevitably that we shall find it again so long as Ethan and Sara have blood brothers among men.

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THE BOOKMAN'S MONTHLY SCORE

Compiled by Frank Parker Stockbridge, Life Member of the American Library Association, in Co-operation with the Public Libraries of America

Five new titles this month; and it's about time! What a long run a book does have in the libraries, once it takes the popular fancy. "Mother India" showed up in this Monthly Score precisely one year ago; has headed the list of general books for six consecutive months. For six months, too, "The Bridge of San Luis Rey" has not been challenged for first place in the fiction score. "Trader Horn" is well along in his second year of library popularity. So is "Napoleon". It is close upon two years since they began to clamor for Richard Halliburton's two books. With all the multiplication of titles put out by the publishers, only thirty-five in all have found their way into these lists of twenty-four, in the past twelvemonth, and eighteen of those have come and gone in that time. Eleven out of the twenty-four named below have been with us for a full year. Not what the trade would call a rapid turnover. —F. P. S.

FICTION

1.	The Bridge of San Luis Rey	*Thornton Wilder*	Boni
2.	Swan Song	*John Galsworthy*	Scribner
3.	The Greene Murder Case	*S. S. Van Dine*	Scribner
4.	Wintersmoon	*Hugh Walpole*	Doubleday
5.	The Children *	*Edith Wharton*	Scribner
6.	All Kneeling *	*Anne Parrish*	Harper
7.	Brook Evans	*Susan Glaspell*	Stokes
8.	Beau Ideal	*P. C. Wren*	Stokes
9.	The Foolish Virgin *	*Kathleen Norris*	Doubleday
10.	Old Pybus *	*Warwick Deeping*	Knopf
11.	The Island Within	*Ludwig Lewisohn*	Harper
12.	The Age of Reason	*Philip Gibbs*	Doubleday

GENERAL

1.	Mother India	*Katherine Mayo*	Harcourt
2.	Strange Interlude	*Eugene O'Neill*	Liveright
3.	Trader Horn	*Alfred Aloysius Horn and Ethelreda Lewis*	Simon
4.	Napoleon	*Emil Ludwig*	Liveright
5.	Disraeli	*André Maurois*	Appleton
6.	My Life	*Isadora Duncan*	Liveright
7.	The Royal Road to Romance	*Richard Halliburton*	Bobbs
8.	The Glorious Adventure	*Richard Halliburton*	Bobbs
9.	The Intelligent Woman's Guide to Capitalism and Socialism	*George Bernard Shaw*	Brentano
10.	Skyward	*Richard Byrd*	Putnam
11.	Safari	*Martin Johnson*	Putnam
12.	The Son of Man *	*Emil Ludwig*	Putnam

* This title has not previously appeared in the Monthly Score.

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In the Bookman Office

Correspondence

English Readers

To the Editor of THE BOOKMAN,
Dear Sir:

In her article in the October issue of THE BOOKMAN, R. le Clerc Phillips gives what she believes to be the reasons for the present unpopularity of American fiction in England. They are, briefly, as follows: American writers as a whole do American life injustice and fail by (1) running counter to the English "high-life" tradition, (2) employing "flat, colorless, monotonous, noisy backgrounds", (3) misuse of pioneer backgrounds, *i.e.* in psychological studies or studies of character or manner, (4) technical deficiencies, (5) provinciality, (6) lack of charm.

It is not possible here to take up all the points made by Miss Phillips. My chief quarrel with the author of "American Writers and English Readers" concerns the following statements: "The fault (with American writers) may lie in the failure of their own (sic) literary powers, or it may be that the American scene does not lend itself very readily to novelistic treatment. I am inclined to think that the latter is probably true", and "I have never once caught a glimpse of a man's soul in any American novel".

Of course where the fault is the failure of literary power there is nothing to say. But Miss Phillips is inclined to lay the lion's share of the blame to the inadequacies of the American scene. This I believe to be very unsound criticism of any literature, whose ultimate success must always rest upon the manner of presentation rather than the matter presented. If *Main Street* and *An American Tragedy* fail it is because Mr. Lewis and Mr. Dreiser are incapable of extracting the essence from their raw material. What, at times, fails Mr. Anderson, is not the scene, but significant concepts of it. And if Miss Phillips has failed to "glimpse" a man's soul in Babbitt, Ethan Frome, Ellen Chesser (in Miss Roberts's *Time of Man*), Hugh McVey, the "hero" of *Poor White,* Dorinda in Mrs. Glasgow's *Barren Ground,* the ex-prostitute in Mr. Wescott's *The Apple of the Eye,* the wretched little white rat of *An American Tragedy* she would seem to be strangely myopic.

As to her charge that American fiction runs counter to European tradition I can only query where in English literature, from Fielding and Richardson to the Wells of *Kipps* and *Mr. Polly* and the Bennett of *The Five Towns,* does Miss Phillips find anything but bourgeois protagonists? Shakespeare, as the "chief exponent" of the aristocratic tradition is an exception which proves no rule. Shakespeare took his plots where he found them, as convenient hooks on which to hang the all-important characterizations and as concessions to a worldly Queen (whose favorite character, bye-the-bye, was Falstaff, a prototype of Sir John Oldcastle, a Lollard martyr and a Simon-pure bourgeois in spite of his title). That Miss Phillips cannot see through the thin disguise of Elizabethan armor only proves her inability to discover the man beneath the crown. It is to the Michael Arlens, largely, that the honors for high-life representation belong. Galsworthy's final reputation will rest, not with his gentry, but with that bulwark of bourgeois stolidity—Soames Forsyte; while no American novel can claim a drabber background than Somerset Maugham's masterpiece, *Of Human Bondage.*

In Miss Phillips favorite literature the same tradition holds true. In France, from the bulk and best of *Le Comédie Humaine,* from Flaubert and Zola to Julien Green (who, whether claimed by the country of his birth or adoption, is an excellent test case) and to François Mauriac the literary main stream has been bourgeois. Flaubert's masterpiece proves that the American failure (if such there be) cannot be attributed to subject matter. Carol and Doc Kennicott are no duller than Emma and Charles Bovary. They are less vital, less universal only because their creator is less of an artist. Kennicott is as direct a descendant of Bovary as Babbitt is of Mr. Polly. And if Flaubert lays a love scene against the exquisite setting of the Rouen cathedral it is only in order by contrast to render even more sordid a sordid adultery.

Although considering the English tradition from Shakespeare, and the French from

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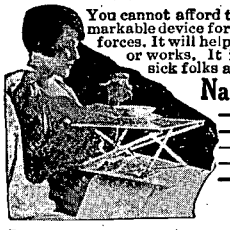

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Rousseau and Renan, Miss Phillips very unfairly refuses to estimate such earlier Americans as Irving, Bret Harte and Mark Twain. Certainly the backgrounds for Rip, Ruggles and Huck were not devoid of romance and glamour.

As to that illusive and important virtue, charm—well, all I can say is that in America, as in Europe, some writers have it; the majority, alas, have not. Using the term "charm" in its broader sense I do not believe that any of the best American writers, with the possible exceptions of Mr. Dreiser and Mr. Lewis, entirely lack it. Taken in the narrower sense there still remains (among others) Mr. Cabell, Miss Cather, Mr. Tarkington, the Mrs. Wharton of Washington Square and the Mrs. Deland of the Old Chester Tales.

Of Miss Phillips' amazing criticism of *A Lost Lady* I can only say that as a member of that large majority who travel even less at home than abroad I am as personally unacquainted with Nebraska and New Mexico as I am with Norway or Russia, but that in *A Lost Lady, My Antonia* and the episode "Tom's Story" in that unequal piece, *The Professor's House,* I find descriptive writing which in their feeling for place is comparable with the pastoral passages in *Growth of the Soil* and *Anna Karenina.*

If, as Havelock Ellis suggests, a critic is only of value in his affirmations I would suggest that Miss Phillips limit her efforts to the literatures of those countries with which she is more in accord.

VIRGINIA NIRDLINGER
New York, N. Y.

Contributors to this Issue

The series of articles which FORD MADOX FORD begins in this issue is the summary of many years of thought on the writing of fiction by an author who has himself written some twenty novels as well as several volumes of criticism. Mr. Ford's latest novel, *A Little Less Than Gods,* is a tale of the Napoleonic epoch. In manner it is closer to some of Mr. Ford's earlier novels than to the tetralogy of the Great War which was concluded last year with the publication of *The Last Post.*

* * *

Evidently the revenue from even the best-selling books of poetry is not all that an

(*Continued on page LXIII*)

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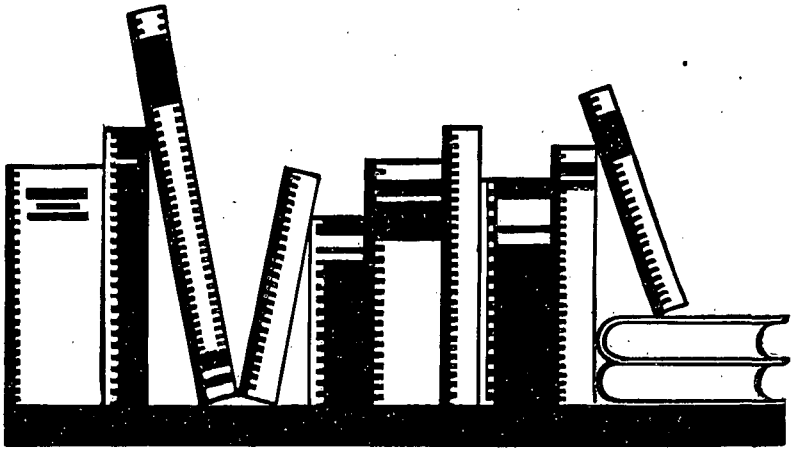

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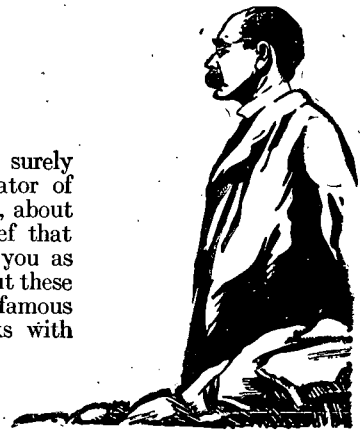
MEMOIRS... ...HISTORY



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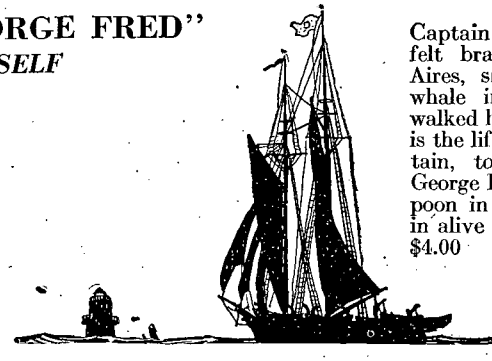

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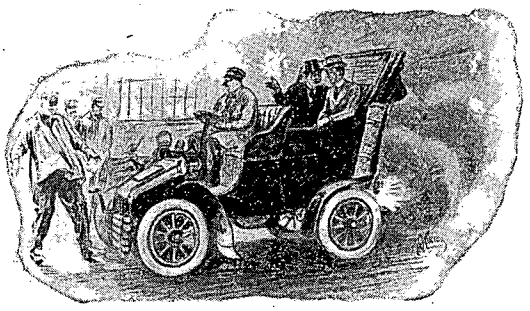

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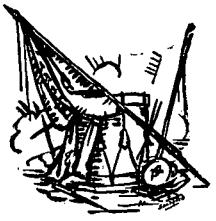

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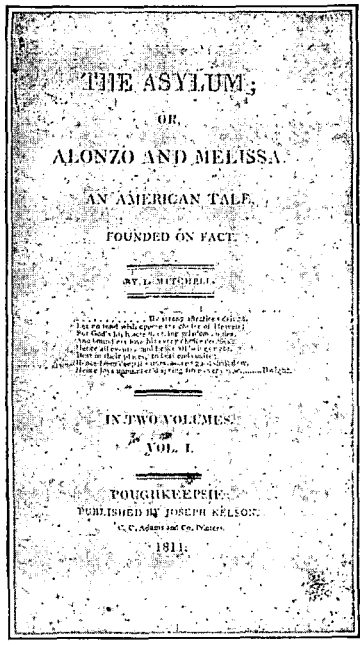

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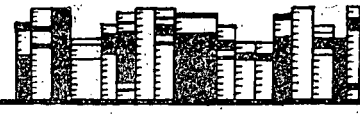
SOME NEW . .  . BEST SELLERS

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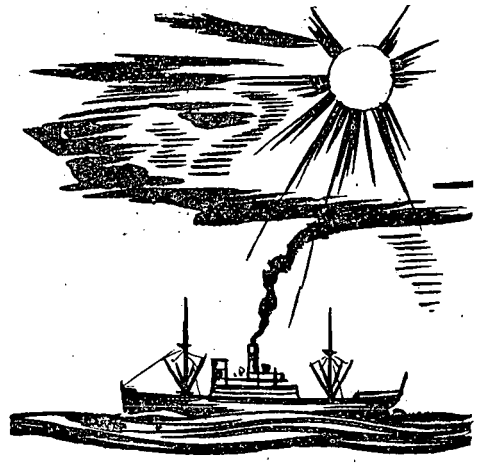

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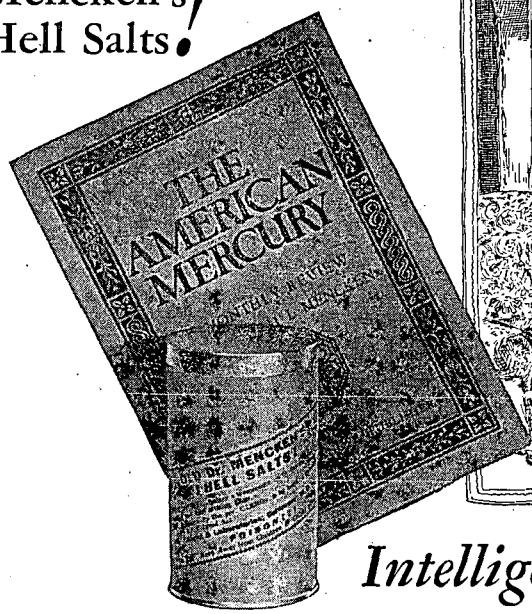

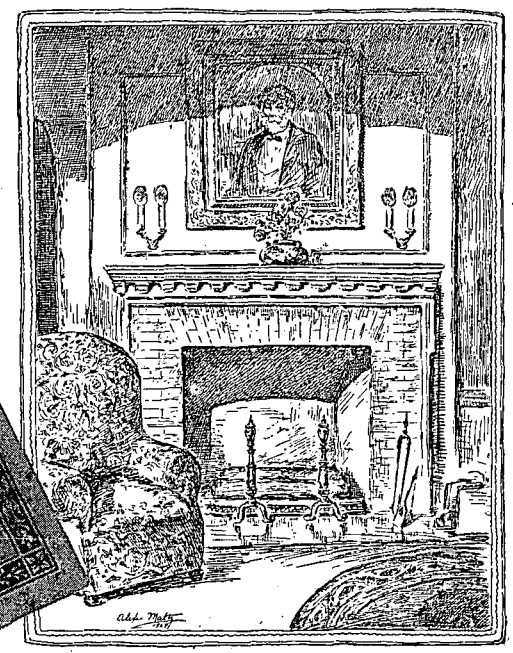

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(*Continued from page L*)

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J. MIDDLETON MURRY is the editor of the London literary quarterly, *The New Adelphi.* His latest book, in which religious themes preponderate over literary, is called *Things to Come.* An earlier book, *Keats and Shakespeare,* dealt almost exclusively with Keats, the subject of his present paper.

GORHAM B. MUNSON has resigned as a member of the firm of Grant Publications and is devoting his time to free-lance literary work and the preparation of a book to follow his recent volume of criticism, *Destinations.* He conducts a weekly class in contemporary literature at the New School for Social Research.

* * *

GRANT C. KNIGHT is associate professor of English at the University of Kentucky. He is the author of *Superlatives,* essays designed to convey to students the pleasures of the study of fiction and criticism.

* * *

Following the newspaper days of which LINCOLN STEFFENS writes in this issue, he gained wide fame as editor, investigator, and reporter through his connection with *McClure's, Everybody's,* and *The American* magazines during the hey-day of muckraking.

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* * *

WILSON FOLLETT will contribute his monthly department (as announced in the forecast of THE BOOKMAN for 1929) from a little town in Maine whither he has gone, following his retirement from publishing, to write.

* * *

The second of ARTHUR BARTLETT MAURICE's papers on the origins of authors' books will treat of his old friend, the late George Barr McCutcheon.

* * *

EUDORA RAMSAY RICHARDSON, a native of Richmond, Virginia, contributed to THE BOOKMAN last year a discussion of *Southern Denominational Colleges* which aroused much comment.

* * *

MURIEL DRAPER, whose book, *Music at Midnight,* will be published shortly by Harper, and whose intimate essays on Henry James and Norman Douglas appeared recently in *Harpers' Magazine,* contributes for the first time to THE BOOKMAN.

* * *

CONRAD AIKEN, who between 1914 and 1924 brought out a half dozen volumes of poetry, has lately been finding his craftsmanship as a poet of real value in the field of fiction. He has published two volumes of short stories and last year a novel *Blue Voyage* which won him praise from the best critics. Aiken is a critic, as well, and the author of *Scepticisms,* a volume of notes on contemporary poetry.

* * *

News Story Award

Through a delay in receiving the decision of the judge, the announcement of the September prize award will be postponed until next month.

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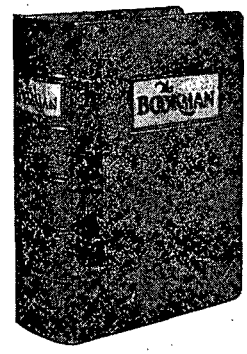

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The BOOK MART

NOW that the book sale season is well under way, it is worth the while of collectors, especially those who have but recently entered upon this fascinating pursuit, to observe the tendencies in modern collecting, as indicated by the auction sales and the records of booksellers. Certain it is that that there is no abatement of the fashion for collecting modern first editions. Those who a few years ago witnessed the sudden and phenomenal growth of the demand for the works of living writers and predicted that owing to the tremendous present-day output of books the fashion would soon pass have been confounded by the logic of events. Mistakes will be made, of course, but the collector who cannot resist the temptation to subscribe to every new limited edition because it may turn out to be a masterpiece of enduring literature will have little reason to regret taking up this line of collecting. It's a fair gamble, anyway, and if you lose you have only yourself to blame. So far as the season's sales of modern firsts are concerned, the results have been most encouraging to the dealers who are stocked with this class of material. With the coming of the Christmas and New Year holidays there will be a lull in auction activities, with a corresponding increase in the book-rooms.

The announcement that the Jerome Kern library is to be sold in January has taken the dealers and collectors by surprise, and the seven days which will be required for the dispersal of this magnificent collection of books and manuscripts will be filled with thrills. Miss Belle daCosta Greene, director of the J. Pierpont Morgan Library says "Mr. Kern has the most fascinating private library I have visited in America". A. Edward Newton says that if he cannot transfer a few choice items from the Kern library to his shelves at Oak Knoll he will be a broken-hearted man. Christopher Morley says that "Mr. Kern's extraordinary instinct for the human relatives in literature and his gift of silence in his search for unusual items, have combined to make his collection unique in modern records". The dealers, who will be competitors for these books, speak naturally with some reserve, but Dr. Rosenbach compares it with the "Sentimental Library" formed by Harry B. Smith some years ago; Barnet J. Beyer calls it "one of the finest private collections in the country"; Gabriel Wells, who has sold many books to Mr. Kern, calls his library one of "remarkable books"; and Harry B. Smith, who owned the "Sentimental Library" writes of Mr. Kern:

> "In his own preface to a recent catalogue Mr. Kern refers to me as his 'friend and mentor'. By his success as a collector he has shown that he needs no mentor, and, in the realm of books, I am no friend of his. For how shall a man be friend to another and yet be tempted to arise and slay him? On not a few occasions, standing in Mr. Kern's book-room and hearing him discourse upon a bibliographical pearl of great price, a gem that I have yearned for but could not achieve, I have felt a homicidal impulse. As he bent toward a lower shelf, one blow from yon folio Shakespeare and the deed were done. Then, being a reader of detective fiction, I knew that some snooping Nemesis would come along and with deadly intuition hunt me down. Another thought stayed my hand: I like his music and there are too few troubadours in this grim world. So I let this man live—live that he might in so few years assemble a collection of books that has done great harm to this generation of bookmen, for it has stimulated two of the Seven Deadly Sins. It is well that Mr. Kern sells his books. In one dazzling array, they tempt others to break the Commandments; the Tenth certainly, and even the Eighth. These treasures divided among many collectors may be looked upon with comparative resignation. I can think of no better summary of my thoughts regarding this collection than a sentence in Luther Livingston's preface to 'A Sentimental Library': 'Who that cares for books at all can fail to feel the thrill that comes at the sight of these books?' "

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The Kern sale will take place at the Anderson Galleries in New York on January 8 and three following days and on January 22, 23 and 24. As this will be not only the great sale of the season, but the most important sale in years, Mitchell Kennerley has deferred his retirement from the active management and presidency of the Anderson Auction Company until after this sale.

The original manuscript of *Alice in Wonderland,* acquired by Eldridge R. Johnson, which is now touring the country for exhibition, having started by being shown to President Coolidge, is probably the best-advertised manuscript in the world. There is in this country, however, another manuscript by the Reverend C. L. Dodgson, the creator of "Alice" which is in its way quite as interesting to adult readers. This is "Tour in 1867" of which the original manuscript is in the possession of M. L. Parrish, Esq., of Pine Valley, N. J., the great collector of Carrolliana. Mr. Parrish has recently had this manuscript privately printed for his friends in an edition of sixty-six copies. It gives the transcript of a journal of the tour of Rev. C. L. Dodgson and Rev. Harry P. Liddon through the Continental countries and Russia, and is written (and occasionally illustrated) in Dodgson's lively style. The book which Mr. Parrish has had printed is bound in full morocco and is a worthy companion volume to Mr. Parrish's recent catalogue of his Lewis Carroll Collection.

It is not often that a whole book is written about another book, but that is what has happened in the case of *Bibliographical Notes on T. E. Lawrence's Seven Pillars of Wisdom and Revolt in the Desert,* by T. German-Reed, published in London by W. & G. Foyle, Ltd. The edition is limited to 375 copies, 350 for sale. *The Seven Pillars of Wisdom* is one of the most mysterious books ever published. The author so arranged the

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printing and assembling of copies that no one but himself could know how many were printed. There were two issues of the book. "Incomplete" and "Complete". Those marked "Incomplete" by the author contained twenty or thirty plates less than the "Complete" copies, and less than fifty of them were printed, bound in half-leather and not for sale but given by Lawrence to the men who had served with him in Arabia and were not able to pay the high price asked of subscribers. The "Complete" copies were bound in full leather and contain about sixty plates. The text is the same in both issues. Of the illustrations, made by famous artists in color and black and white, sixty-eight are in the text and there are sixty-one others placed together at the end of the volume. A certain number of copies will be found to have at the foot of page XIX (List of Illustrations) a note in the author's hand: "Complete Copy. 1-XII-26". But—although labelled as "Complete" some copies appear to have a plate among those following the text—"The Prickly Pear", which is not included in the list at the beginning. Other copies have an extra plate of a wood-engraving by Blair Hughes-Stanton to illustrate the dedicatory poem to "S. A." A few of the copies marked "Complete" by the author appear to lack a few of the illustrations. A "Complete Copy" brought £570 at Hodgson's in November, 1927. Other copies last season brought £310 and £250, the latter having the plates shaved. Similar discrepancies are noted in copies of the abridged edition known as *Revolt in the Desert*. Of the American edition of *The Seven Pillars of Wisdom*, printed by Doran to secure the American copyright, there were only twenty-two copies, of which only ten were for sale.

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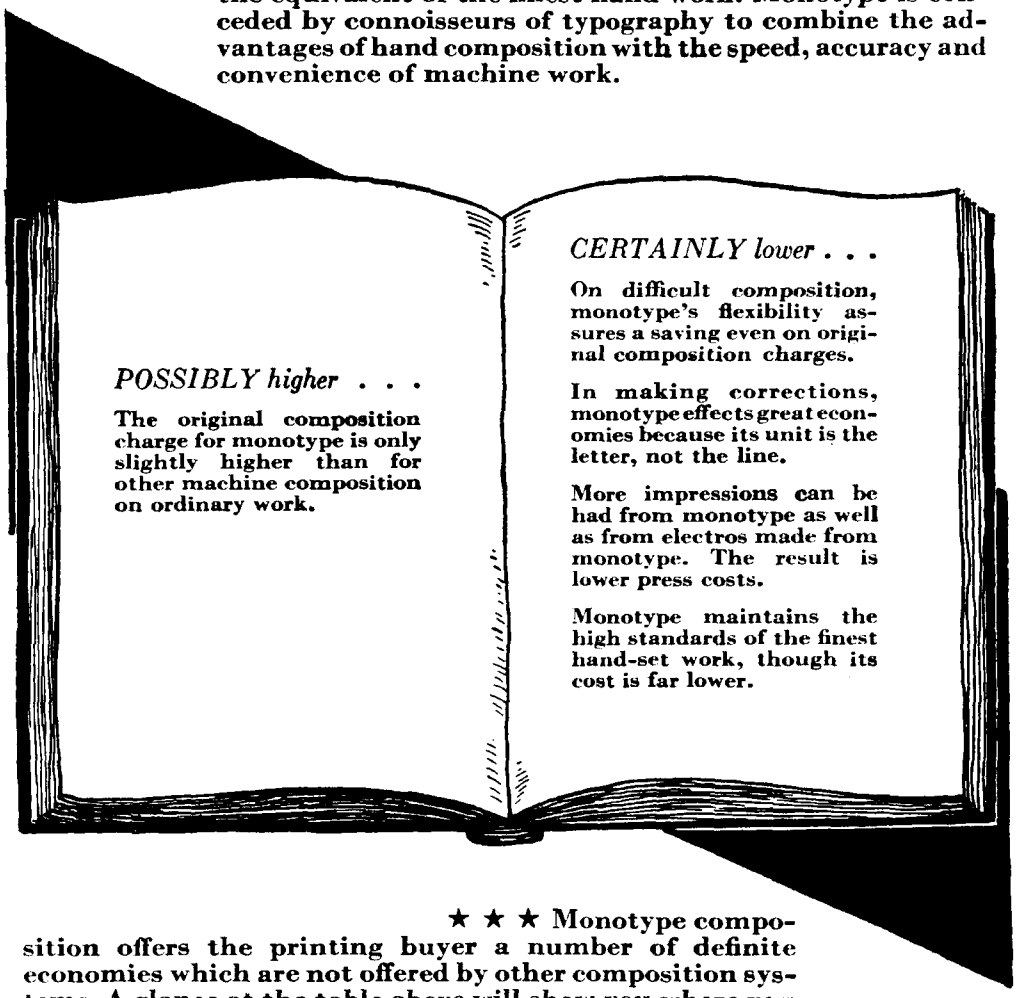

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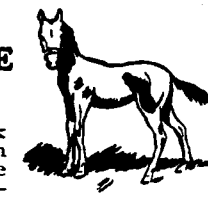

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